

GET TO KNOW BUDDY CARLYLE

CapTalk

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF THE ATLANTA BRAVES

MARK TEIXEIRA ADDS
SERIOUS HOME RUN POP
TO MIDDLE OF BATTING ORDER

POWER PACKED!

THE STOPPER

HOW SOUL SEARCHING
AND NEW COMMITMENT
MADE HUDSON AN ACE AGAIN

GREAT ESCAPE

AN INSIDE LOOK
AT YUNEL ESCOBAR'S
HARROWING JOURNEY
FROM CUBA TO THE MAJORS

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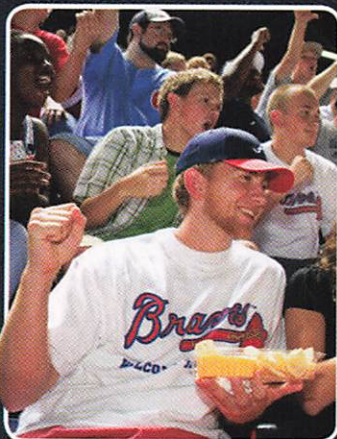
Tickets can be purchased in advance at braves.com/allyoucanseat, 1.800.326.4000, any Ticketmaster outlet or Turner Field ticket office

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SEPTEMBER line-up

Braves vs Mets | AUGUST 31st, SEPTEMBER 1st, 2nd



31
FRI

Braves Hat Night

Presented by Delta to the first 45,000 fans

Publix Friday Night Fireworks

Enjoy fireworks after the game



7:35 PM

1
SAT

Latin Night

Latin bands and dance instructions in the Plaza

Food and drink specials around the ballpark



3:55 PM

2
SUN

All-Star Sunday

Alumni appearances by Dale Murphy and Albert Hall

Kids run the bases after the game



1:05 PM

Braves vs Phillies | SEPTEMBER 3rd, 4th, 5th

3
MON

Braves Rally Poster

Presented by Chick-fil-A to the first 8,000 fans



1:05 PM

4
TUE

Coca-Cola 2-for-1 Tuesdays

Buy One Get One FREE Tickets



7:35 PM

5
WED

McDonald's® Outfield Advantage

Buy One Get One FREE Tickets

Business Fan Special

Last chance for 2007! Play hooky from work or bring your VIP clients to watch the game



1:05 PM

Braves vs Nationals | SEPTEMBER 7th, 8th, 9th

7
FRI

Publix Friday Night Fireworks

Enjoy fireworks after the game

Mystery Home Depot Gift Card

Presented by The Home Depot to the first 15,000 fans



7:35 PM

8
SAT

80's Mullet Head Night: 80's Cover Band, 80's

Trivia game and vote for the best mullet of the night

Future Stars Night: Meet the future stars of your

Atlanta Braves! Braves Minor League players sign autographs and host a Q&A session in Fan Plaza



7:05 PM

9
SUN

All-Star Sunday

Alumni appearances by Greg Olsen and Jay Howell

Kids run the bases after the game

Bark in the Park: Bring your dog to the game. \$18 includes 1 human ticket and 1 canine ticket



1:05 PM

Braves vs Marlins | SEPTEMBER 17th, 18th, 19th

17
MON

MasterCard Grand Slam

Ticket Pack

4 Tickets, 4 Hot Dogs, 4 Cokes, Parking Passes and Program starting at \$59



7:05 PM

18
TUE

Coca-Cola 2-for-1 Tuesdays

Buy One Get One FREE Tickets

Air Force Night: 60th Anniversary. Air Force

Academy Cadets parachuting into Turner Field, on-field presentation and fly over



7:35 PM

19
WED

McDonald's® Outfield

Advantage

Buy One Get One FREE Tickets



7:35 PM

Braves vs Brewers | SEPTEMBER 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd

20
THU

John Smoltz Statue Night

Presented by Coca-Cola to the first 15,000 fans

College Night: Appearances by college mascots and

local bands in the plaza. Ticket discounts with college ID.

Topps Ticket Thursdays

Buy One Get One FREE Tickets



7:35 PM

21
FRI

Fan Appreciation Weekend

Fans get the chance to win prizes and Braves merchandise

Publix Friday Night Fireworks

Enjoy fireworks after the game



7:35 PM

22
SAT

Fan Appreciation Weekend

Fans get the chance to win prizes and Braves merchandise

Choptoberfest: Celebrate the second annual

Choptoberfest. Traditional German Bavarian band and learn to Polka



7:05 PM

23
SUN

Fan Appreciation Weekend: Fans get the

chance to win prizes and Braves merchandise

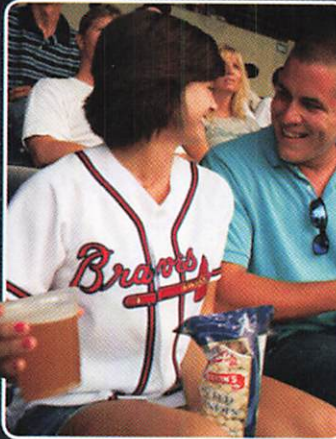
All-Star Sunday: Alumni appearances by

Charlie Leibrandt, Don Schwall and Jay Howell

Kids run the bases after the game



1:05 PM



BATTING ORDER

SEPTEMBER 2007

POWER HITTERS

6-9

THE INNER SANCTUM

Behind-The-Scenes Tour Of The Clubhouse Facilities

By Patty Rasmussen

14-15

Q&A

An Interview With Buddy Carlyle

By Patty Rasmussen

22-24

POWER PACKED!

Mark Teixeira Adds Texas-Sized Home Run Pop
To Middle Of Batting Order By Jay Busbee

25-27

THE STOPPER

Soul Searching And New Commitment
Made Hudson An Ace Once Again By Jon Cooper

28-31

GREAT ESCAPE

An Inside Look At Yunel Escobar's Harrowing Journey
From Cuba To The Big Leagues By Patty Rasmussen

32-33

FAMILY PHOTO ALBUM

Scenes Of The Wives And Kids
Having Their Day at Turner Field

36-37

ADDED RELIEF

Dotel Brings Experience And Success As Both
A Set-Up Man And Closer By Mark Bowman of MLB.com



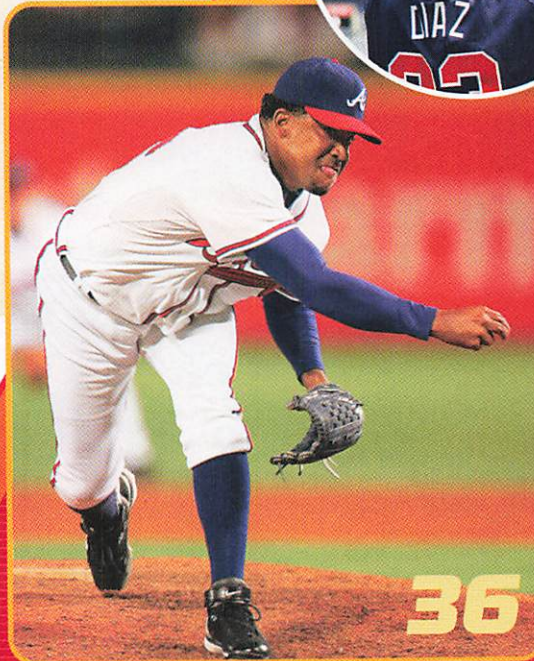
DANIEL BOYSS/NEWSPHOTO

ATLANTA BRAVES



COVER CREDITS

MARK TEIXEIRA
Courtesy of the Atlanta Braves
Tim Hudson and Yunel Escobar:
Courtesy of the Atlanta Braves
Design by Clark Odom



ATLANTA BRAVES

BATTING ORDER

SEPTEMBER 2007

SINGLES HITTERS

- 12-13 SCOREBOARD
- 18-19 BUNTS & BASEHITS
- 20-21 OFF THE FIELD
- 39 BEHIND THE NUMBERS By Steve Fall
- 52-56 HEROES & HISTORY
- 52-53 **Larry McWilliams'** Behind-the-Back Stab
Helped Stop Rose's Binge at 44 Games
By Brian Knapp
- 54-55 **Lou Burdette's** Defining Achievement
Delivered Baseball's Ultimate Prize to
Milwaukee By Gary Caruso
- 56 ALUMNI NOTES
BIRTHDAYS
- 58-59 BEYOND BASEBALL By Patty Rasmussen
- 60-61 TALKIN' CHOP
- 62 XTRA INNINGS

PITCHERS

- 11 PAINTING THE CORNERS By Jay Busbee
- 17 CARAY CORNER
- Skip!
- 19 JOHN SCHUERHOLZ
- 21 BOBBY COX
- 24 BATTER UP! By Ron Mahay
- 27 AROUND BASEBALL By Ken Rosenthal
- 57 GARY CARUSO
- 61 JOHNNY SAJEM'S Cartoon

PINCH- HITTERS

- 17 KNOW YOUR BRAVES - WILLIE HARRIS
- 37 HOW I MADE IT TO THE MAJORS
By Steve Fall
- 46-47 GAME BY GAME
- 48 INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
- 49 2007 SCHEDULE CALENDAR
TV LISTINGS
ROSTER
- 50-51 TURNER FIELD, TICKET INFO

ON DECK

- 41-45 FARM SYSTEM ROUNDUP By Bill Ballew
- 42 TOP PROSPECTS BY POSITION
- 43 DOWN ON THE FARM By Tommy Hanson
- 44-45 FARM CLUB STATISTICS

11



12

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 9

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HOME | PLATE

THE INNER SANCTUM



PHOTOS BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

The players' lounge is the equivalent of a family room, equipped with all the comforts, as well as TVs, computers and even a card table.

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

CONSIDERING BRAVES players spend at least half the regular season in their clubhouse at Turner Field, is it any wonder most consider it a home away from home?

After all, it's not just a place to change into a uniform before going out to play a game. The clubhouse is equal parts living, working and playing space, very much like the players' own homes. They shower there, eat meals there, hang out, work out, suffer and rejoice there.

"A clubhouse is a sanctuary for a player," said Terry Pendleton. "It should be a relaxing place, and it is when things are going good. And it's still relaxing when things aren't going good, because you have your teammates around you."

Pendleton has the added perspective of knowing what an "old school" major league clubhouse is like versus the customized spaces organizations build today.

"This is the lush life compared to what we had when I played," he said, gesturing around the Braves' locker room, which has been in use since Turner Field opened in 1997.

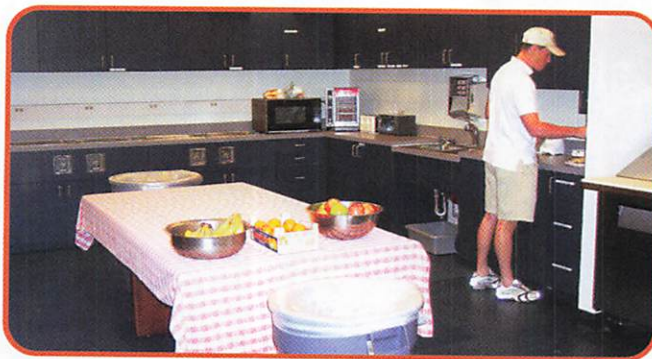
That "lush life" Pendleton refers to is 7,000 square feet of space, divvied up according to need. Bill Acree, longtime director of team travel and equipment manager for the Braves, had his hand in planning the Turner Field clubhouse after Atlanta learned the city would host the 1996 Olympics, and that the Braves'

new home would be the retro-fitted Olympic Stadium.

"The original plan was that [the locker room] would all be a circle, one big, happy circle," he said. "But you can imagine how much room that would have taken up." Instead, the plan changed to extend a rectangular area at the bottom of a smaller circle, creating a key-shaped locker room. Twenty-five lockers for the 25-man roster make up the circle. The rectangle has 15 more lockers for coaches, callups, and staff.

Lockers have space for hanging uniforms and extra clothing. Each has two storage bins, one overhead and one under the bench seat in the locker. Players cram their lockers full and occasionally clean them out during the season, though most wait until

Clubhouse attendant ("clubbie") Dillon Blakes, a student at Georgia Tech, tends to some duties in the kitchen.



the day after the last game.

Most homes have family rooms, and in the Braves' clubhouse, that's known as the players' lounge. Three flat screen televisions are mounted to the wall above a larger flat screen TV at one end of the room. Four computers with internet access line a built-in countertop. Two comfortable sofas are arranged in the center of the room, and a card table sits at the ready to accommodate a favorite pastime of many players.

The décor is pretty basic, though framed Braves jerseys from the 1926 and 1935 Boston Braves, the 1957 World Championship Milwaukee Braves, and the 1966, '68, '72, '76, and '80 Atlanta Braves hang on the wall. A cigar store Indian stands in the corner near the door to the clubhouse lobby.

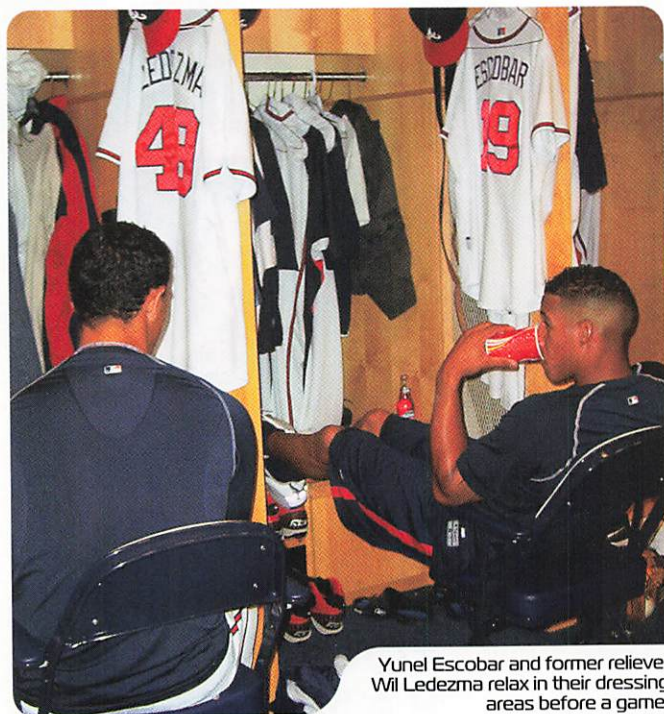
A counter offering assorted snacks and candy separates the lounge from the spacious commercial type kitchen/food room. Clubbies (five clubhouse attendants per game) stand ready to replenish the stocks or get whatever else a player might want. Refrigerator space is available to those players who bring their own food or snacks from home.

A meal is prepared for those who want it, though most players eat well before a game or hold off until afterward, preferring only light snacks after batting practice.

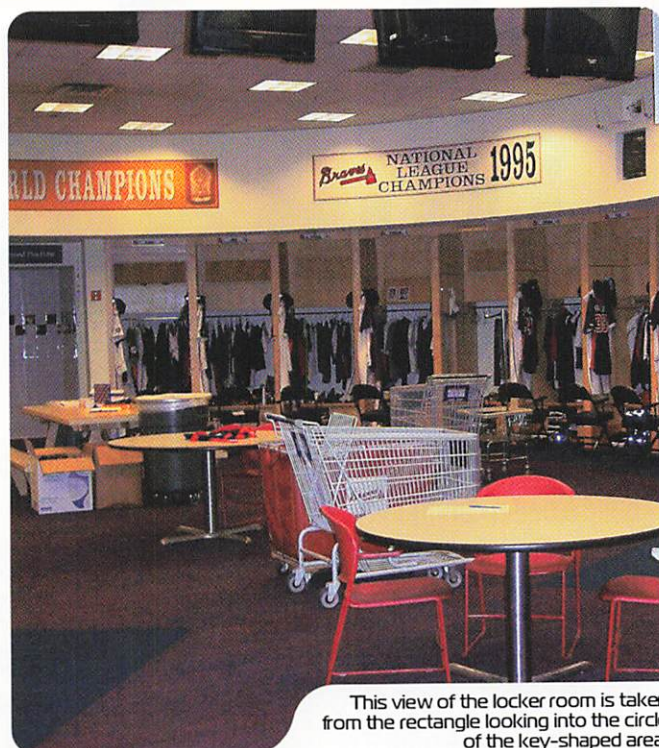
The laundry room holds two commercial grade washers and four large commercial dryers. Laundry is done constantly - after batting practice and during and after games.

One of the best clubhouse features, according to the players, is the hallway that arcs behind the back of the locker room, connecting the laundry/kitchen/lounge area to the private areas - shower room, bathroom, weight room and training room. On those days when an interview with a reporter isn't high on their list of priorities, players can go from the lounge to weight room and back again without ever being stopped to answer questions!

Due to privacy issues, the training room is off limits to the media. Dubbed "Pursley's Place" in honor of Dave Pursley, the retired Braves trainer, the training room at Turner Field can han-



Yunel Escobar and former reliever Wil Ledezman relax in their dressing areas before a game.



This view of the locker room is taken from the rectangle looking into the circle of the key-shaped area.

Coaches Roger McDowell and Eddie Perez take care of pre-game paperwork while watching a game on a flat screen TV.



dle everything from preventative treatment to trauma level care. Emergency medical technicians are always on site during games, as is at least one member of the Braves medical staff. A standard medical examination room is located off the trainer's room.

The main treatment room has several tables where players receive care for muscle aches and pains. There's a rack of 42 spools of tape, a variety of widths and types, used mainly for wrapping ankles and wrists. The training room offers electric stimulation and ultrasound machines for treating tendinitis.

"The basis of the whole thing is service," said Jim Lovell, the assistant athletic trainer to Jeff "Bubba" Porter, the head athletic trainer. "We're here to take care of the athletes. The physician's edict of, 'First, do no harm,' is taken very seriously. We can accomplish a great deal with ice and compression."

Lovell says that most players visit the training room every day, whether for full-blown rehab or treatment - an ice bath for a hyper-extended elbow for example - or simply to pick up an Ibuprofen or sunscreen.

"Sunscreen is very popular in the training room," Lovell said. "Everybody has the kind they like, and we push it. It's been known

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Atlanta Braves pitcher John Smoltz knows it's important to build a better community. That's why John is helping the Atlanta Community Food Bank strike out hunger. We need your help too! You can help Georgians in need by joining John's Strike Out Hunger team. John is donating \$100 to the Food Bank for every strikeout this season. And you can receive a sports item autographed by John for every pledge YOU make. As a special thank you for your donation and support, each paid pledge will receive a gift based on the pledge levels shown below. All gifts are tax deductible less the retail value of the item(s) received. All gifts will be autographed by John Smoltz.

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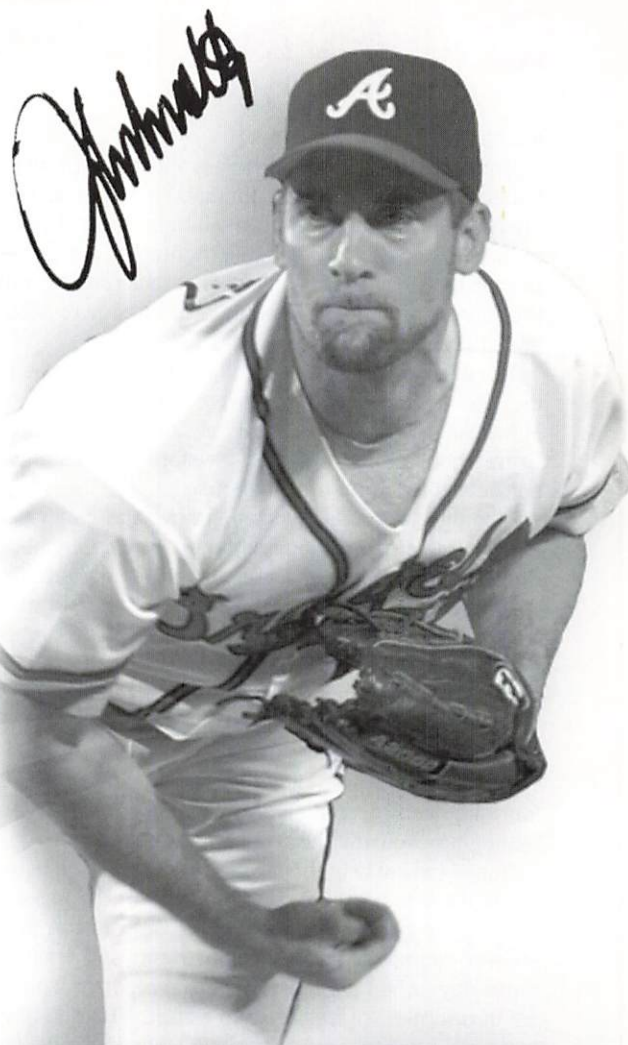
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The Strike Out Hunger season begins with the Braves opening home game and ends with the final regular season home game.
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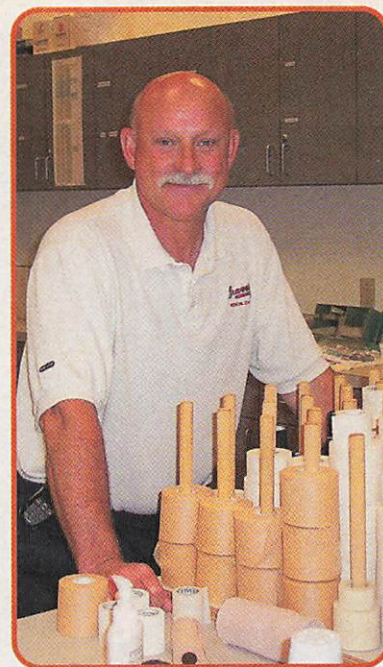
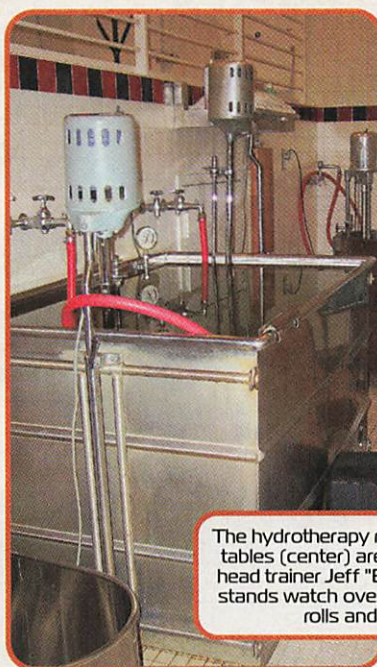
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The hydrotherapy room (L) and treatment tables (center) are critical to the work of head trainer Jeff "Bubba" Porter (R), who stands watch over a staple of his trade - rolls and rolls of tape.

to happen, but you'd hate for someone to miss a game because of sunburn."

The hydrotherapy room is a popular post-batting practice or post-game destination. Sometimes there's a line waiting for the extremity pool, the smaller of the two stainless steel tanks that holds ice-cold water for soaking feet, ankles and arms. Though it doesn't look possible, players have been known to soak their entire bodies in the extremity pool, according to the trainers!

The whirlpool holds warm water, 104 to 108 degrees; a germicide gives the water a green tint. A flight of stairs leads to a four-by-six-foot resistance swimming pool, used to give a high-resistance workout with a minimum of stress on aching muscles and joints.

The clubhouse also features a fully equipped gym stocked with assorted weight machines, free weights, treadmill and elliptical machines.

Alan Butts, baseball systems operator and bullpen catcher, has a small office off the weight room where he compiles scouting reports used by the coaches when they make their pre-game reports to Bobby Cox.

The coaches use the conference room to fill out paperwork, while watching games on a large, flat screen television. They meet with Cox, whose office is next door, prior to every game.

Cox's office has its own full bathroom, and is furnished with a large desk, a drink cooler, and a large sofa, where the manager has been known to bunk down after a late night game, though not very often.

"I'd rather get four hours of sleep in my own bed than five or six here," said Cox. "It's not very restful because of the noise."

Cleaning crews have to come through the clubhouse every night to vacuum.

Across the hall from the conference room is the much-used video room filled with computers and recording equipment. Rob Smith, video coordinator, tapes every game and is able to create replays of individual at-bats or pitching sequences for players to review. The players use the video room almost as much as they do the lounge.

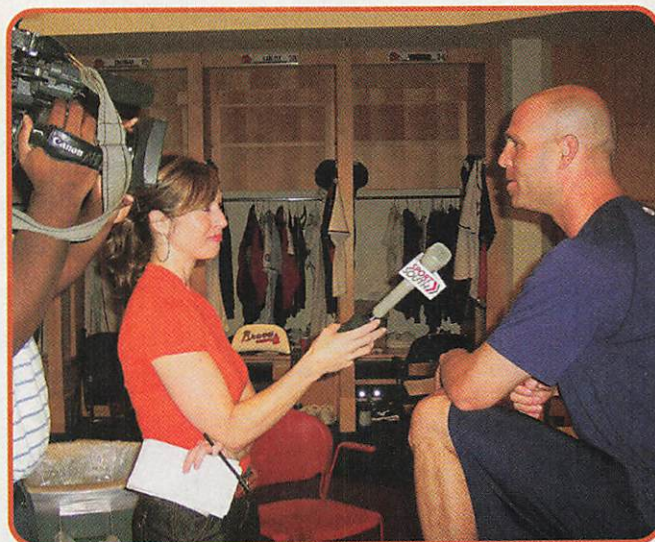
Tim Hudson talks to TV reporter Katy Temple in the locker room before a game.

A "bat room" holds the teams bats, each sorted according to a player's number on the end of the knobs. A larger equipment room with extra storage for uniforms is located across the field access hallway, next to the large Braves indoor hitting cages.

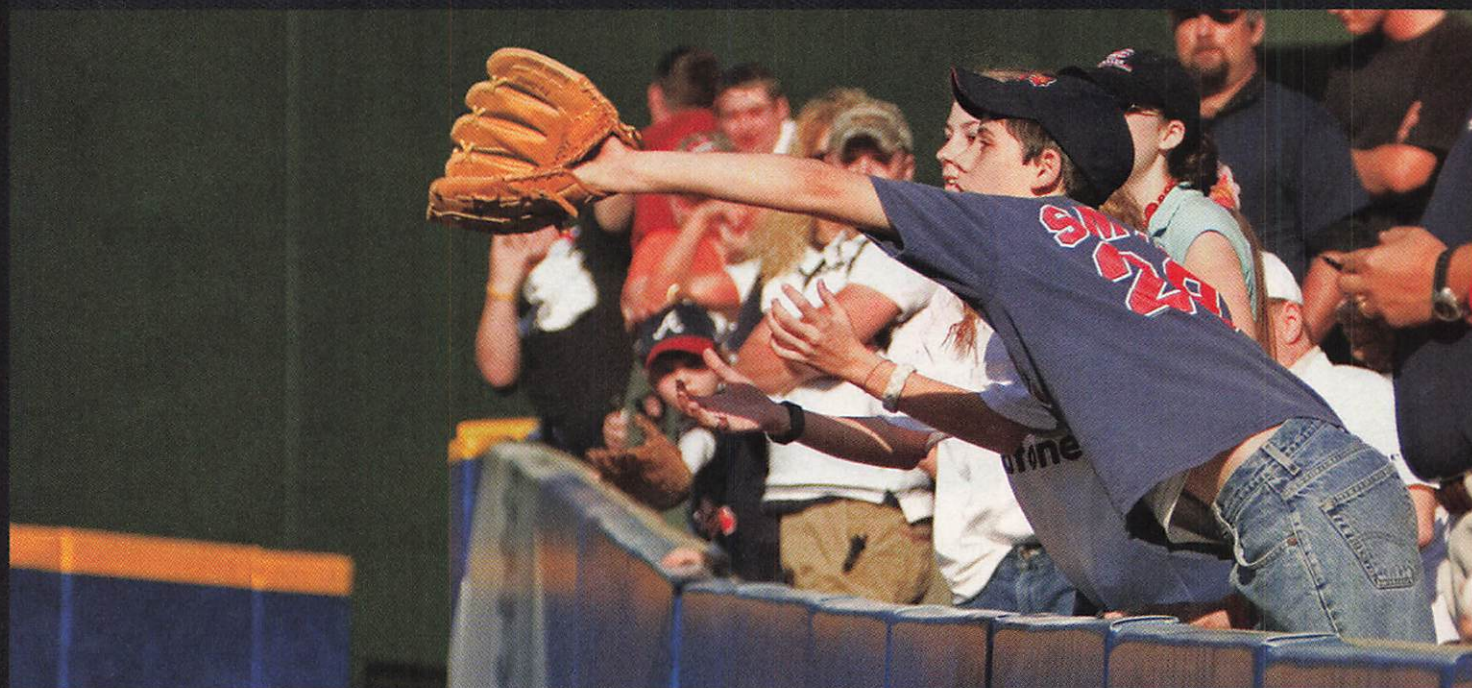
The clubhouse space is rounded out by a small office for Acree and a slightly larger office for Ben Acree, Bill's son and assistant clubhouse and equipment manager, and Chris Van Zant, the assistant clubhouse and team travel manager. Ben and Chris are also responsible for managing the staff of clubbies, who do everything from cleaning players' shoes to making runs to Taco Bell.

Like any home, changes have been, and will continue to be, made. A putting green, once famously used by golf loving former teammates Tom Glavine, Greg Maddux and John Smoltz, remains but is unused for the most part. Many players sit there while making cell phone calls, an activity banned in the clubhouse.

"Just like your own house, there's never enough storage space," said Bill Acree.



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CHIPPER'S THEME: I'M GONNA HIT LIKE IT'S 1999

EARLIER THIS SEASON, Chipper Jones was swinging some serious lumber. He wasn't always making contact, but when he did, it usually ended up in the seats. The Braves were winning... the fans were thrilled... but Chipper knew he could be doing much more.

He told ChopTalk that he wouldn't feel in a groove until he started piling up multi-hit games, working the count, and spraying the ball to all fields.

Groove, meet Chipper. Chipper, groove.

It's been awhile, but I think you two remember each other.

Of all the surprises this season, none has been more welcome than Chipper's assault on the National League leaderboards. It's been like finding an unopened present stuck behind the Christmas tree on December 27, and it's a big reason why Atlanta fans aren't making any plans for October vacations just yet.

If John Smoltz is the Paul McCartney of the Atlanta Braves - the link to the Beatlesque trio that included Tom Glavine and Greg Maddux - then Chipper Jones is the Rolling Stones, so permanent and reliable that you forget he's there... until he decides to flex his muscles and show the young kids how the game's played.

Chipper's spent the last several seasons watching Andruw Jones, Brian McCann and Jeff Francoeur slap baseballs all over Turner Field and bask in the fans' accolades. Nobody suggested his skills were declining, but as the injuries piled up, so did the whispers: Fragile. Injury-prone. Twilight of his career.

What nobody seemed to pick up on was the fact that as frustrated as the fans were (and shortsighted, too, because he missed hardly any games from 1995 to 2003), Chipper himself was even more disappointed in his breakdowns. He hit well even in his injury-plagued years, and he knew he had at least one more monster season in him to rival his MVP-winning 1999. He said as much to ChopTalk last September.

But that "fragile" tag's a tough one to shake. So, while his '07 began with a bang, including 10 homers through May 1, a freak injury to both hands, sustained when he flipped over Pittsburgh's Jose Bautista, brought out the



ATLANTA BRAVES

doubters in full cry. It also led to the season's unquestionable low point, a maybe/maybe not "feud" between Chipper and Smoltz during which Smoltz seemingly called out Chipper for not playing while hurt.

The feud itself is better left forgotten, but what's indisputable is that Chipper has torched both leagues since being activated from the DL around that time. As of early August, he was batting .366 since June 13 -

Chipper went 6-for-13 (.462) with a mammoth home run and five RBIs when the Braves took two of three from the Mets at Shea Stadium Aug. 7-9.

able way to get the guy out.

"I'm always looking for the fastball, but if the pitcher's not going to offer that, I've got to play the situation and take what he gives me," Chipper said. "It takes a mature hitter, a guy who's been through it for a long time, to realize how to react to those situations. A young guy probably wouldn't have the patience to sit there and wait out pitchers."

As a result, he's spent most of the season among the National League leaders in all major hitting categories, ranking in the top 10 in average, slugging percentage, and on-base percentage (second only to walker supreme Barry Bonds) despite missing two dozen games to injury. That's the kind of productivity that starts MVP talk swirling - talk that Jones, reasonably enough, would like to keep at a distance for now.

"It'd be nice, sure, but that's not what we're after," Jones said. "It would definitely mean a lot after the last few seasons, but I'd still rather be playing in the post-season than watching it with the MVP."

Still, the final month of the season is shaping up well for both Chipper's candidacy and the Braves' post-season chances.



I'D STILL RATHER BE PLAYING IN THE POST-SEASON THAN WATCHING IT WITH THE MVP (AWARD).



hitting safely in 38 of 45 post-DL starts, including 18 multi-hit games.

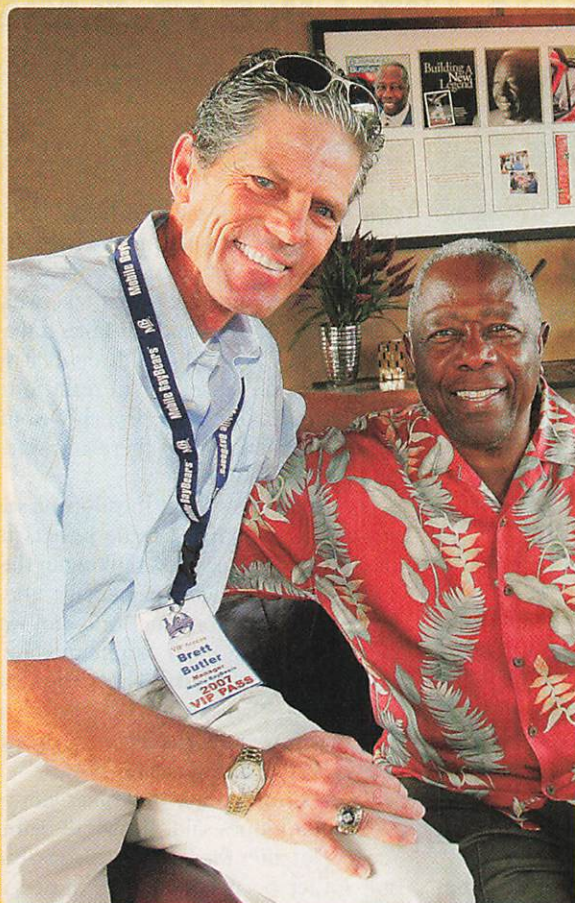
So, did Smoltz light the proverbial fire under Chipper after all?

"No," he said quickly. "I felt like I was swinging the bat well when I came off the DL [June 13, a week and a half before the Smoltz incident]. It was just a matter of time before my thumb and my groin healed and I started taking off."

What's indisputable is that Chipper is showing the rare combination of in-game intelligence and skill at the plate. The way he's hitting right now, there's just no reli-

No offense to Andruw, but his low-.200s average wasn't exactly encouraging teams to take it to Chipper. With Mark Teixeira swinging a hundred more points of lumber in the cleanup spot, Chipper's seeing a lot more hittable pitches in his No.-3 slot, and doing damage with them when they arrive.

"I'm putting up three, four, five good at-bats a night," Jones agreed. "I don't take it for granted that [pitchers] are going to make mistakes. I'll hit the mistakes out of the ballpark, but I assume they're going to hit their spots, and I want to be ready for them when they do."



Former Brave Brett Butler chats with Hank Aaron at Hank Aaron Stadium in Mobile where Butler managed prior to his mild stroke July 28.

HANK & BRETT

HANK AARON AND BRETT BUTLER, two former Braves who have been in the news lately for drastically different reasons, got together July 22 in Mobile, Ala. The occasion was an International Friendship Series game between USA Baseball and China's Olympic team.

Aaron and Butler met for a chat at Hank Aaron Stadium in Aaron's hometown. Butler (OF, 1981-83) manages the Mobile BayBears, the Double-A affiliate of the Arizona Diamondbacks who play at the facility. Aaron (OF/1B, 1954-74) threw out the ceremonial first pitch and spoke to the U.S. team.

Six days after the meeting (July 28), Butler, 50, suffered a mild stroke. According to BayBears spokesman Tim Hagerty, Butler returned to the stadium Aug. 6 for the first time since the stroke and addressed the team and the media. It is unknown if he will manage again this year.

A day later, Aug. 7, Aaron's all-time career home run record fell when Barry Bonds hit No. 756.

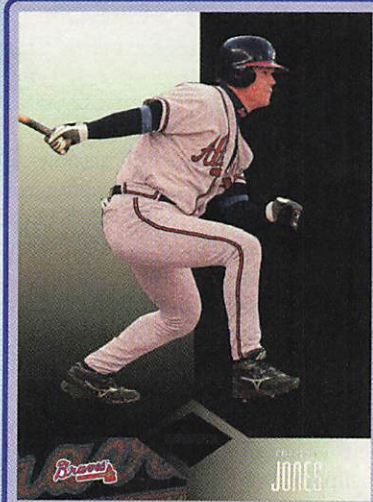
Aaron congratulated Bonds via a video message that was played on the big screen at AT&T Park and follows:

"I would like to offer my congratulations to Barry Bonds on becoming baseball's career home run leader. It is a great accomplishment which required skill, longevity and determination.

"Throughout the past century, the home run has held a special place in baseball, and I have been privileged to hold this record for 33 of those years. I move over now and offer my best wishes to Barry and his family on this historic achievement.

"My hope today, as it was on that April evening in 1974, is that the achievement of this record will inspire others to chase their own dreams."

CHIP ENGLISH/MOBILE BAYBEARS



CARD OF THE MONTH

WHAT COULD BE HOTTER right now than a Chipper Jones card?

With Chipper enjoying an extraordinary season that has him challenging for the National League batting title, this is the perfect time to add one or more of his cards to your collection.

This 2004 Leaf Limited Bronze Spotlight (#193) features a picture of Chipper slashing a hit from the left side on a flashy silver and black background. It's also a reminder of the sacrifice

Chipper made to help the Braves and accommodate Vinny Castilla. The card lists him as an outfielder, which indeed he was in 2002 and '03 when Castilla was at third base. Chipper spent most of his time at third in 2004.

The "book value" is \$8, but we found it at bbonly.com for \$6.40. Check with your local card dealers (consult the Yellow Pages) or do an internet search to shop for this and other Braves cards for your collection.

CT ALUM

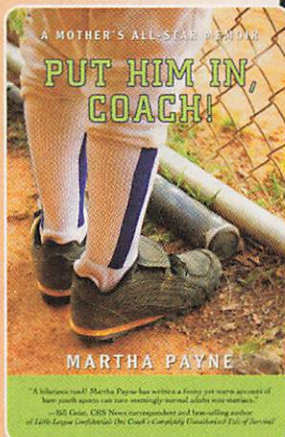
LONGTIME CHOPTALK READERS may remember the writing that Martha Payne (below) used to contribute to the magazine. Payne, who lives in Atlanta and is a life-long Braves fan, just had a humorous book published that is bound to entertain any baseball fan or anyone who has any sort of Little League experience as a player, coach or parent.

"Put Him In Coach" (iUniverse, 186 pages) is available in hard cover (\$26.95) or paperback (\$16.95) at the publisher's web site (iuniverse.com), as well as at online bookstores such as amazon.com.

CBS News correspondent Bill Geist, himself quite a humorist, gives Payne's book a ringing endorsement: "A hilarious read! ...Martha Payne has written a funny yet



SPECIAL



warm account of how youth sports can turn seemingly normal adults into maniacs."

ChopTalk agrees. Let Payne take you through the ups and downs of her son Sam's Little League years, and you'll be sure to chuckle all the way - from cover to cover.

Payne, by the way, is donating half of all royalties from sales of the book to RBIs (Reviving Baseball in the Inner Cities), which Major League Baseball sponsors.



SMOOTH THE INFIELD

AFTER THE THIRD AND SIXTH INNINGS of every Braves home game, the "William Tell Overture" starts to play. At that instant, nine members of the grounds crew dash onto the field (below). By the time the song ends, the infield looks like a game had never taken place.

"We've got it down to a system," said field director Ed Mangan, whose crew strives to complete the smooth-over in one to one and a half minutes.

Of the nine grounds crew members, six pull the "drags" while three rake the cutouts and change the bases.

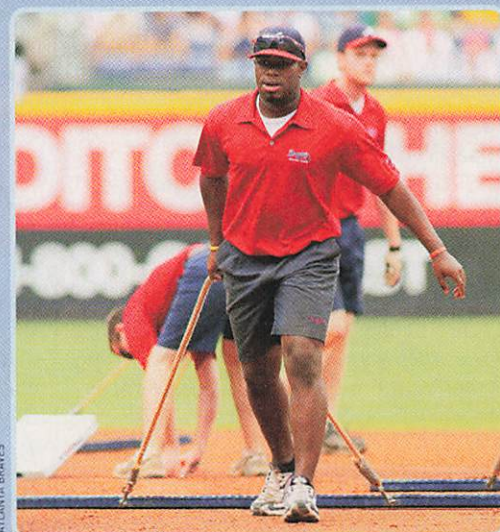
The men on the drags get out of the gate first. They set the drags down behind first base and start walking counterclockwise around the infield's dirt or "skin" area. They'll drag the outside part first, make the turn at third base, start back on the inside, and finish it off. While that's happening, the other three men position themselves at first, second and third base. They start by pulling out the bases. After the drag passes, they set the new bases down. Then they finish hand raking around them, and sprint off the field.

The grounds crew personnel get rotated, so that it's not always the same people in the same roles. Early in the season, some newcomers may have to be trained. If so, they put the experienced employees up front and tell the others to keep up and follow.

While the music and sudden entrance grabs the fans attention, the grounds crew knows what's really important.

"We're not the show out there," said Mangan. "The objective is to get the game back going as soon as possible and get out of the way. So, we want to get out there quickly.... get the infield as good as possible, and get out as quickly as we can."

- STEVE FALL



ATLANTA BRAVES

THE BEST!

FOLLOWING THE SEVEN-PLAYER DEAL that brought Mark Teixeira to the Braves from Texas July 31, there were many media reviews of the move. One of particular note comes from columnist Hal Bodley of USA Today, who is in his 50th year of covering baseball. On Aug. 3, Bodley wrote: "John Schuerholz isn't a miracle worker. He's just the best general manager baseball has ever known."



INTERVIEW BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

CHOPTALK How and when did you get the nickname Buddy?

BUDDY CARLYLE I have been Buddy my entire life. My dad claims it was him, but I've heard that my maternal grandmother claims that she gave me the nickname. I think it was my dad who called me Buddy as a baby. I've never been called anything else. I was called Earl on the first day of school, and that was it!

CT And your dad is an "Earl" too?

CARLYLE Yes, I'm the third.

CT Is your son, Carter (age 4), an Earl also?

CARLYLE No, the chain is broken.

CT Why did you decide that Earl was no longer a viable first name?

CARLYLE I don't have a kingdom, so I figured after three we should shut it down.

CT Are people from your past coming out of the woodwork now that you're a starting pitcher with the Braves? Do people recognize you when you go out?

CARLYLE (Laughs) No, I have loyal friends and family members who have been with me all along. There are probably people who are following me more carefully than they used to. It hasn't changed any-

Carlyle, who was at Richmond until May 25, beat the Mets Aug. 7 for the fifth win in his last six starts and his seventh victory overall.

thing as far as friends from home. As far as being recognized, with two children (Carter and 1-year-old daughter Kennedy), we don't get out much. We're pretty much at home or at the stadium. I keep a pretty even keel. I've played long enough to know that a few good weeks can be coupled with a few bad weeks really fast, and everyone will forget who you are. You're quicker forgotten than thought of.

CT When you played in Japan or Korea, people probably recognized you?

CARLYLE Yeah, that's a little different. You really stick out. My wife, Jessica, and I would walk down the street and were usually taller than most of the people. Lots of times I think they thought we were basketball players, though I'm not nearly that tall (6-3).

CT How was playing in Japan (Hanjin Tigers) and Korea (LG Twins) different than here in the U.S.?

CARLYLE It's interesting, because it's different from Japan to Korea. In Japan, they play our old school way, pretty much the way baseball was played in the early 1900s. There are a lot of customs that you have to adhere to, bowing at certain times and things like that. But as long as you respect their culture, it was fine.

CT Were there ever any wacky things that happened that you thought, "That would never happen in the U.S."?

CARLYLE That happened pretty much on a daily basis. I couldn't begin to explain all the things. The best advice I got about playing in Japan was, "Never ask, 'Why?' Don't ask, 'Why are we stretching for an hour?' Just accept what you're told to do."

CT Was your family over there with you?

CARLYLE My first year (in Japan, 2000), I was engaged. The second year, I was married and we were expecting Carter. Kennedy was born last year, in the U.S. I was in Korea. I signed with Korea in May, flew there for two weeks and came home for Kennedy's birth. I went back after two days. Jessica and Kennedy didn't come over to Korea, but a friend of mine brought Carter over for 16 days. It was great to have him there. We were in Seoul. I think the thing he liked the best was that he got to ride the subway every day.

CT You've been a free agent for the last five off-seasons. Did you ever feel like your career was over or that you should just pack it in?

CARLYLE No, I never thought my career was going to be over. People have asked me that question a lot, but I've felt competitive wherever I was. I didn't expect to be starting for a team like the Atlanta Braves at this point in the season. But every baseball player believes they're

“ IN THE OFF-SEASON, SOMETIMES WE’LL (FAMILY) SIT AROUND AND FEEL KIND OF BORED BECAUSE EVERYTHING’S THE SAME. ”

Sometimes it irked me when [American] players go over [to Japan or Korea] and think they're big time and don't respect their culture, because it is their country and their way of playing baseball. Who are we to go over there and say they're playing the wrong way? Korea plays a little more similar to the way we do, because they haven't been playing as long, only 30 to 40 years. They've modeled their league after the contemporary American baseball game.

capable of doing this. Maybe they don't have the opportunity.

CT How much of your confidence is physical, trusting your pitches and your ability, and how much is mental or maturity?

CARLYLE It's both. I think I feel stronger than I did when I was younger, but pitching is a hard thing for anybody to do. When you're young, it's hard to know how to handle yourself

over 162 games. The older you get, it's easier to manage your body and your mind. I think your body grows numb to the long season.

CT How did the deal happen that made you a Brave?

CARLYLE Two things, John Coppolella (Braves director of baseball administration), used to work with the Yankees when I played there in 2004, and he initiated the contact with my agent and me. I also had a prior relationship with Roger McDowell as a pitching coach in the minor leagues (2005 with the Dodgers' Triple-A team), so I called him in the off-season and he told me if I came to spring training, I would have a chance to pitch. That's all you can ask. Some places you go and pitch one inning and they send you down. That doesn't do anyone any good, but they were true to their word, and I got to pitch a lot of innings during spring training (16 IP, 1. 69 ERA). They gave me every opportunity.

CT How has your family adjusted to moving from city to city, country to county?

CARLYLE I think we've all done really well with it because we all like to travel. In the off-season, sometimes we'll sit around and feel kind of bored because everything's the same. When spring training comes around, we're ready to go. That might change when our kids get a little older. Carter loves to go different places, and I think he's lived in 10 different cities and he's only 4 years old. We're so used to it that it feels normal. Certainly without Jessica being as adaptable and willing to sacrifice as much as she has, this wouldn't be possible.

CT Carter's had an interesting life for a 4-year old.

CARLYLE He really has. That's why I think he's so perceptive to his surroundings and people. He likes to talk to people.

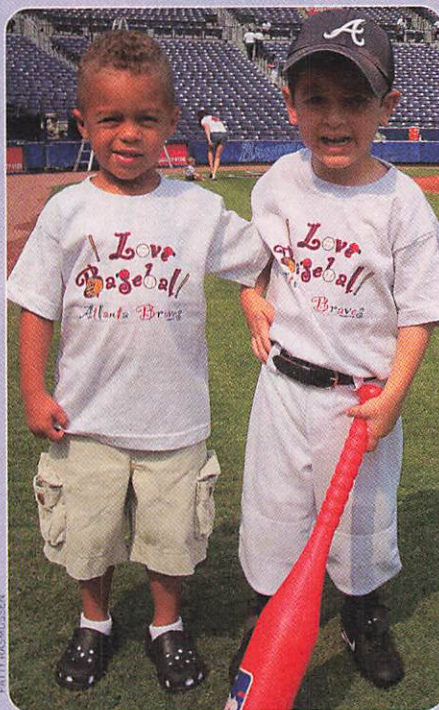
CT Has he made friends with [Andruw Jones' son] Druw (age 3)? They both like to talk baseball.

CARLYLE Yeah, when they get together, it's like listening to an ESPN broadcast.

They're always talking about the game, the details of the game. It's amazing to hear those two guys talk about baseball.

CT Has your perspective on being a major leaguer changed since you made your debut in 1999?

CARLYLE You have a better understanding of how lucky you are to be [at the major league level]. You could be gone next week and no one would miss you. You tend to be very realistic. I'm grateful for the two months I've had here. I've said it before, if this was the end of my career and I didn't pitch after this, I'd be okay. Some people



might say, "You played for so long and only played in the bigs for a year." They might consider it a failure, but in no way do I consider my career a failure. I consider it successful that I was able to do what I wanted to do. Coming from Bellevue, Nebraska, and getting a chance to play in the major leagues is special, no matter what happens from here on out.

CT What were your emotions like after pitching that incredible game on June 5 vs. the Marlins (a one-hitter for seven

innings), then being told you were being sent to Richmond immediately after the game?

CARLYLE It just seems normal to me. Some people get really bothered by things in baseball, but I honestly can say that if they said, "You're not starting this week, you're going to the bullpen," it wouldn't bother me. You care, but I'm not going to lose sleep over it. When you've been doing this for so long and been sent down in so many different places, you grow numb to it. It doesn't really bother you anymore.

CT What was your reaction when you got the cell phone call to come back while you were still driving to Richmond?

CARLYLE It was just more of the same. It wasn't a big deal. I realize that if for some reason I can't play baseball, my life isn't over. I have a beautiful wife, two great kids and know I'm fully capable of doing something else. I've worked as hard as I can when I'm pitching, between starts and during the off-season. If I've done all that and it's not good enough, what else can I do? And how could I be angry about that?

CT Are you surprised by your success this season?

CARLYLE I'm not surprised. It's just hard to get an opportunity. I felt strong all last year and felt I was capable of pitching in the big leagues. That said, if someone

Pals Druw Jones (L) and Carter Carlyle can talk baseball together like a couple of ESPN broadcasters!

told me at spring training that I would have two months of major league work, I would have been surprised. Obviously, I'm very happy and grateful that I signed with the Braves, an organization that gives guys like me an opportunity. It makes a huge difference. The older you get, if you have a bad game that might be it. Here, it's almost funny. You have a bad game and they give you the ball again and say, "Go get 'em," almost like you're a 21-year-old prospect that they've groomed. It makes you perform better, because everybody wants to feel useful, no matter where you work.

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THE BIG TRADE SENDS AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE

NOBODY ASKED ME, BUT...

Here's a note to those of you who think the Braves gave up too much to get Mark Teixeira from Texas. If you were looking ahead to 2010 and 2011, then you are right. It could be a bad trade.

But that isn't the way the Braves do business. The Braves feel that if you pay to watch Major League Baseball, then you should see the best the Braves can offer. And that is exactly what happened.

This deal is significant in several ways. Not only does it turn the Braves' lineup into one of the best in baseball, but it also shows the great confidence John Schuerholz has in his minor league organization. Some good kids are gone, but there are more coming.

More important is what this says about the Braves' new ownership. Acquiring Teixeira is expensive for this year and will be ever more expensive next year. But they stepped up and bit the bullet.

Their willingness to spend some money has been largely ignored - but I think it's a wonderful sign for the future.

NOBODY ASKED ME, BUT...

Okay, I admit it. I was in tears watching Tom Glavine win his 300th. I know many of you don't like him, and that is your right. But if you knew Tom and his wife, Chris, and the kids like I do... you would have cried, too.

He's a great person. Wouldn't he be a nice fourth or fifth starter for some team in the Deep South before he hangs 'em up?

NOBODY ASKED ME, BUT...

I was thinking after Willie Harris's game-saving catch against the Mets on Aug. 9 about how timing is everything. He made a sensational play, and he made it on a hot day in the middle of a pennant race. It goes right up there with Otis Nixon's catch of Andy Van Slyke's "almost home run" in 1992.

For the few of you who may not know about it, "The Catch" by Nixon took place July 25 in the ninth inning against Pittsburgh. It saved a 1-0 lead from becoming a 2-1 defeat and extended the winning streak to 13 games that propelled the Braves to their second straight NL pennant.

Those of us who are lucky enough to see Major League Baseball on a regular basis see a great major league play every four or five days...

But timing is everything... and the ones you remember are the ones that are involved in the pennant race. Nice going, Willie.

NOBODY ASKED ME, BUT...

Here's what I thought about the Barry Bonds coronation.

I thought Commissioner Bud Selig was wrong to stand with his hands in his pockets when Bonds tied the record. If you aren't going to show any respect, then you shouldn't have been there...

I think that the people who are up in arms about Henry Aaron not being there need to get a life... and Henry's video congratulations to Bonds was perfect. Now leave the poor man alone...

I thought the fact that Bonds tied the record against a pitcher who failed a drug test while Barry has never flunked one was, to say the least, ironic.

Finally... Barry Bonds has done a great thing... but he's almost always alone. He's a Hall of Fame player and a truly great ballplayer. I wish we could leave it at that.

NOBODY ASKED ME, BUT...

I really wonder what we accomplish when we make headlines that a former major league ballplayer... in this case Rod Beck... had cocaine in his house when he was found dead. If he died due to cocaine abuse, how is that a story?

Sadly, it happens to a lot of people each and every day - but only the former ballplayers, or a rock star, or a movie star, or a politician get the headlines.

The man is dead. Isn't it time to leave him alone?

Having said that, I tip my hat to Beck's widow, Stacey. She talked about what a terrible addiction it is and that Beck was killed by a fatal disease. Good for her - but I shudder when I think about what this is going to do to the Beck children.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Skip Caray and Chip Caray alternate months in this space, so watch for Chip in October. Skip will be back here in November.

KYB

KNOW YOUR BRAVES

2006 STATISTICS

* WITH BOSTON

AVG.	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
.156	47	45	17	7	2	0	0	1	4	11	6

WILLIE HARRIS

#22

BASICS

FULL NAME WILLIAM CHARLES HARRIS
POSITION Outfielder
VITALS
 Bats/Throws Left/Right
 Height 5-9
 Weight 170
 Age 29
BORN June 22, 1978
 Cairo, Ga.
CONTRACT Signed through 2007.
ACQUIRED Signed as minor league free agent, Dec. 9, 2006.
PERSONAL Single, Daughter (Arianna).

CAREER

MR. OCTOBER

Boasts 1,000 career post-season batting average (.2-for-.2) by virtue of going 1-for-1 in 2005 Division Series and 1-for-1 in 2005 World Series.

IN THE BEGINNING

Born and raised in Cairo, Ga., birthplace of Jackie Robinson, who is credited with integrating baseball in 1947.

OUT OF PLACE

Listed in Braves' media guide as an infielder but has played almost exclusively in the outfield this year.

RING BEARER

Member of the 2005 World Series Champion Chicago White Sox who scored the only run in decisive Game 4 after delivering pinch-single.

PHOTO



ALLISON SHARP/STARS

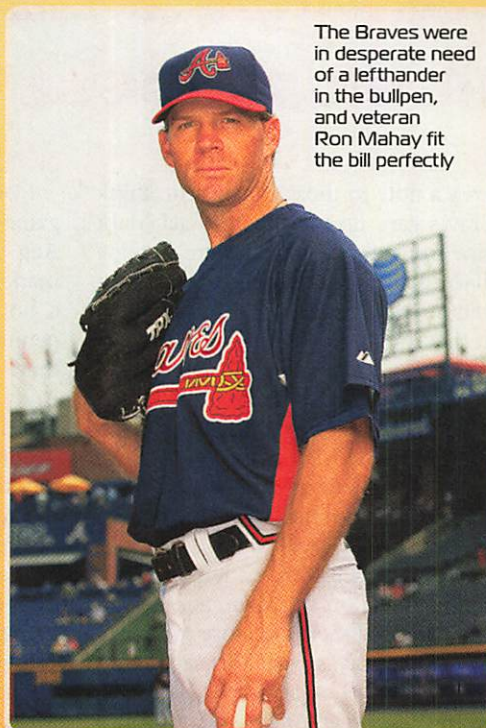
DEADLINE DEALINGS

JOHN SCHUERHOLZ SENT SHOCK WAVES through the National League on the July 31 non-waiver trading deadline by pulling off three transactions involving 12 players - four coming and eight departing.

The biggest name involved in the flurry was first baseman **Mark Teixeira**, a slugging switch-hitter and two-time Gold Glove winner who became a Brave, along with lefty reliever **Ron Mahay**, who came from Texas in exchange for highly regarded catcher/first baseman **Jarrod Saltalamacchia** and four minor league players - highly rated shortstop **Elvis Andrus**, right-handed pitcher **Neftali Feliz**, and left-handed pitchers **Matt Harrison** and **Beau Jones**.

The Braves also sent disappointing righthander **Kyle Davies**, who'd been demoted to Richmond, to Kansas City in exchange for right-handed reliever **Octavio Dotel**.

The trading was completed when Schuerholz acquired minor league lefty reliever **Royce Ring** from San Diego for two other lefties, **Wil Ledezma** and **Will Startup**. Ring, 26, was sent to Richmond. A hard thrower, Ring was 4-0 with a 1.99 ERA, .188 opponents' batting average, and 44 strikeouts in 31 2/3 innings at Triple-A Portland this year and 1-0 with a 3.60 ERA in 15 innings for San Diego.



The Braves were in desperate need of a lefthander in the bullpen, and veteran Ron Mahay fit the bill perfectly

ALLISON SHARREFFS

HALF-DOZEN MAN

Willie Harris tied a franchise record with six hits July 21 in a 14-6 win against St. Louis at Turner Field. The only other Brave to get six hits in a game in the modern era (post 1900) was **Felix Millan** in 1970. Five Braves (**Sam Wise**, **King Kelly**, **Bobby Lowe**, **Fred Tenney** and **Chick Stahl**) did it between 1883 and 1899.

Harris, who broke out of a slump with his big game, had four singles, two triples and a career-high six RBIs, raising his batting average from .317 to .339. As an added bonus, he did it all in front of an Atlanta regular season record crowd of 53,953. The only larger crowd at Turner Field was 54,357 for Game 5 of the 2003 Division Series.

MAJOR SETBACK

Edgar Renteria sustained a high right ankle sprain Aug. 2 and had to be helped off the field. He was immediately placed on the 15-day disabled list, but it was expected he would miss a week or two more than that.

The shortstop, who has been among the league leaders in batting average (.336 at the time of injury) all season, was injured when fielding a groundball against Houston. The hard-hit ball took a high hop, and when a crouching Renteria reached up to grab it, his weight transferred back and his ankle collapsed and twisted under him. Reliever **Joey Devine** was called up from Richmond to replace him on the roster.

ON THE MOVE

The Braves signed 48-year-old first baseman **Julio Franco** to a contract July 18 and added him to the roster the next day after he was released by the Mets and cleared waivers. However, on Aug. 1, the Braves designated Franco for assignment. He accepted minor league assignment to Rome on Aug. 7 in the hope he would be called up in September.

John Smoltz was activated from the DL July 18, and **Joey Devine** was optioned to Richmond.

Wil Ledezma was activated from the restricted list July 19, and **Kyle Davies** was

optioned to Richmond and **Jose Ascanio** was optioned to Mississippi. Ten days later, July 29, Ledezma was designated for assignment (and eventually traded to the Padres) and Ascanio was recalled to Atlanta.

Lance Cormier was activated from the DL July 30 and sent to Richmond. On July 31, the Braves purchased catcher **Corky Miller** from Richmond and optioned **Chad Paronto** to Triple A.

On Aug. 1, Ascanio was sent back to Mississippi, and on Aug. 2, **Jo-Jo Reyes** was optioned to Richmond, and Cormier was called up to Atlanta.

Martin Prado was recalled from Richmond Aug. 7, and **Joey Devine**, who was called up when **Edgar Renteria** was injured, was optioned to Richmond.

On Aug. 10, **Octavio Dotel** was placed on the disabled list, and right-handed reliever **Manny Acosta** was called up from Richmond.

SHORT HOPS

The Braves signed **Ryan Drese**, a 31-year-old righthander who won 14



games for Texas in 2004, to a minor league contract and assigned him to Class A Myrtle Beach where he'll attempt to recover from the elbow surgery he had last April.

A **Andrew Jones** says he's in pain with every swing, which he says is a result of spraining his left elbow May 27 when he reached over the fence to rob the Phillies' **Greg Dobbs** of a home run. A cortisone shot Aug. 3 did not ease the pain, he said.

A Infielder **Willy Aybar**, who hasn't played a game this year, was released from a substance abuse program but will not play this year because he had to have surgery Aug. 14 for a stress fracture in his right hand.

A **Mike Hampton**, who is recovering from elbow surgery, began a throwing program Aug. 6 and may pitch in the Fall Instructional League and possibly winter ball in hopes of returning to the Braves next season.

A The Braves set a franchise record with 10 doubles July 29 in a 14-0 win over Arizona. **Chipper Jones** tied his career high with five RBIs, even though he had just one official at-bat (three-run double to go with two sacrifice flies).

A **Brian McCann** threw out a career-high three attempted basestealers July 27 at Arizona, the first Braves catcher to do so since **Javy Lopez** in 1995.

A Rumors already have started that Royals general manager and former Braves executive **Dayton Moore** will interview **Terry Pendleton** as a managerial replacement for **Buddy Bell**.

A **Anthony Lerew** had **Tommy John** surgery July 19. He last pitched May 19 at Boston.

A **Bob Wickman** had his sore right forearm examined Aug. 10-11, but nothing other than inflammation was found, so he returned to pitching.

A **Bobby Cox** was ejected for the 132nd time in his career Aug. 14, passing **John McGraw** for first all-time. He argued a called third strike on **Chipper Jones**.

OUR CHANGES CREATED MORE BUZZ AT THE PARK

WE WERE BUSY AT THE TRADING DEADLINE. We knew we had to do something. We wanted to kick-start the roster a bit, and we felt good about what we did. Acquiring a dynamic marquee player like Mark Teixeira at mid-season is very unusual.

To be able to do that and get Ron Mahay, who helps round out the bullpen, and to make the deal for Octavio Dotel, we strengthened some areas. We felt if we couldn't come up with a dominant starting pitcher, the next best thing was to strengthen areas where we were already strong. The offense had been real productive, and we made it stronger.

We also got Royce Ring, a guy we had good reports on and wanted to acquire to improve the depth of our left-handed bullpen pitchers.

For Teixeira, we gave up a lot, but fortunately we had the talent to make the deal. You can't get that kind player without a rich talent package, and we knew that going in.

When you're as close as we are to getting in the playoffs... we don't think we overbought, but we were aggressive in getting the deal done.

We felt we needed to do it, and we're comfortable in doing what we did.

Our hope is that these moves will get us in the playoffs this year and next - and hopefully deep into the playoffs.

We think with strengthening our bullpen and adding to the offense, we'll be able to both score more runs and shorten other teams' rallies.

I don't believe that we now have more freedom to do deals under new ownership. I have the same amount of freedom that I've always had. I've never had anyone tell me to do - or not to do - anything in the management of the roster. I think if we want to discuss the expansion of the financial roster this off-season, we all believe there's a better chance of that happening now.

But in respect to the Teixeira deal, I think we could have done it under previous ownership. In moving forward, though, I think Liberty will be very supportive of what we hope to do - and that is build championship teams.

Edgar Renteria is doing fine and making progress from a high ankle sprain. He has been rock solid for us all season. But in his absence, Yunel Escobar has filled in admirably. His offense and defense have been sensational.

The way the team is playing and the acquisition of Teixeira have stimulated interest and excitement in our clubhouse first, in the media, as well, and that has resonated to the fan base. Our local fans and the extended fan base have responded favorably. There's been great excitement. It's been wonderful. There's been a lot of buzz in the ballpark.

I went to Cooperstown for the Hall of Fame inductions this year. I go as often as I can. It's one of my favorite baseball places on earth. I love it.

Anyone who works in baseball in any capacity - or covers it in the media or is a fan - ought to visit Cooperstown at least once and more often than that, if possible. It's really good for the baseball soul.

The crowd was so large that I don't know if anyone was left in Baltimore. My brothers, who are great fans of the Orioles and Cal Ripken, were there, and we had a nice weekend. Plus, my good friend Denny Matthews, who joined the Kansas City Royals the first year I was there, was inducted into the broadcast wing of the Hall of Fame.

So, I had lot of good reasons to be there. Even without those, I try to get there as often as I can.

OUR HOPE IS THAT THESE MOVES WILL GET US IN THE PLAYOFFS THIS YEAR AND NEXT - AND HOPEFULLY DEEP INTO THE PLAYOFFS.

HO! HO! HO!

Third base coach Brian Snitker and Jeff Francoeur play Santa at Egleston.



LOADED WITH TOYS collected during a three-day drive back in mid-June, Braves players and coaches, their wives and Braves broadcasters played Santa Claus July 17, visiting children at Scottish Rite, Egleston and Hughes Spalding hospitals for "Christmas in July".

The toys were collected in a three-day drive at Turner Field. **Kim Hudson**, Tim's wife, admitted that the generosity exceeded expectations. But she was even happier about the generosity of the players regarding their time.

Participants included **Tim and Kim Hudson**, **Jeff Francoeur** and fiancée **Catie McCoy**, **Jarrod Saltalamacchia**, **Matt and Leslee Diaz**, **Eddie Perez**, **Tyler and Liezel Yates**, **Scott Thorman**, **Buddy and Jessica Carlyle**, **Chuck and Julie James**, **Brian McCann** and fiancée **Ashley Jarusinski**, **Kyle Davies**, **Kelly Johnson** and fiancée **Lauren Thacker**, **Chad Paronto**, **Chris and Erin Woodward**, **Peter Moylan**, **Brian and Ronnie Stitker** and **Pete Van Wieren**.

BIG WEEKEND

The Atlanta Braves Foundation Weekend generated an all-time high of more than \$90,000 for the Atlanta Braves Foundation and its Grants Program, July 20-22, at Turner Field. The total compared to \$64,000 in 2006.

Braves memorabilia, including game-worn jerseys, autographed baseballs, photos, lineup cards and other unique and valuable items were up for auction to benefit the Atlanta Braves Foundation.

Top silent auction items included a Braves bat signed by **Andruw Jones**, **Chipper Jones**, **John Smoltz**, **Brian McCann** and **Edgar Renteria** that sold for \$1,800, an autographed **John Smoltz** glove and photo that sold for \$1,500, and a **Brian McCann** autographed catcher's mask that went for \$1,000.

DOG DAY

The so-called "dog days" of summer usually are in August, but this year, they carry over to Sept. 9 when the Braves hold

their second "Bark in the Park" promotion of the season.

Fans are invited to bring their dogs to the 1:05 game against Washington at Turner Field. However, they must pre-register at www.braves.com/bark by Aug. 31. Tickets are \$18 and include one "human ticket" and one "dog ticket". Space is limited.

Proceeds from "Bark in the Park" will benefit the **Bobby Cox** "Paws beCause... They are Worth Saving," helping to rescue animals in danger of being euthanized.

SMOLTZ'S CAUSE

For the 48th time in **John Smoltz's** career, he signed autographs Aug. 4 outside Turner Field for an hour before the game to collect food and funds for the hunger in support of the Atlanta Community Food Bank.

For every 20 cans of food or \$20 donated, a fan received one autograph on a sports item brought from home (limit two autographs per person).

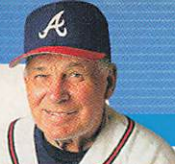
Smoltz's autograph sessions are part of

a long-time commitment of fighting hunger and supporting the Food Bank, an Atlanta-based regional hunger-relief organization that distributes food and needed products to 38 metro Atlanta and North Georgia counties. Besides the autograph sessions, Smoltz, who launched his Strike Out Hunger campaign in 1997, also offers another facet of the campaign for collectors.

Limited edition photographs, baseballs, official Smoltz Braves jerseys and gloves are some of the many items that are also available to patrons for prices ranging from \$25 to \$2,500.

Supporters can call (404) 892-FEED ext. 1246 or visit ACFB.org to order collector's items. ChopTalk is a partner in the Strike Out Hunger program. See page 8 of this issue for a form that can be used to order autographed items.

Additionally, Smoltz made a commitment to contribute \$100 dollars to the Food Bank for every strikeout he records this season. At this writing, he had 126 strikeouts, ranking seventh in the National League.



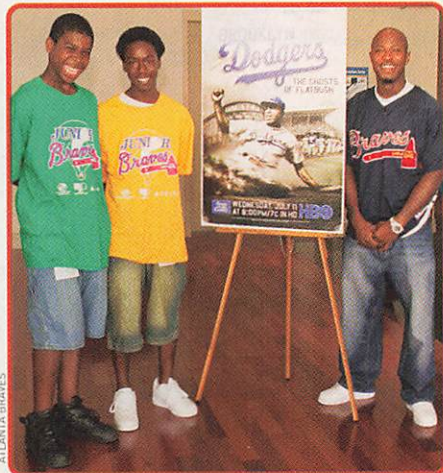
LUNCH WITH WILLIE

In commemoration of the 60th anniversary of **Jackie Robinson** breaking the color barrier in Major League Baseball, the Atlanta Braves and HBO partnered for a special screening of the critically acclaimed documentary *Brooklyn Dodgers: The Ghosts of Flatbush*, produced by HBO Sports in association with Major League Baseball Productions.

On July 31 at Turner Field, **Willie Harris** (right in photo below) spoke to 50 youths from the Junior Braves/RBI Baseball League and Carver YMCA Little League and watched the film with them. Harris, a native of Cairo, Ga., where Robinson was born, spoke about his respect and admiration for Robinson and his accomplishments, as well as the qualities required to become a champion in sports and in life.

Every year, more than 1,300 youths have the opportunity to learn and enjoy baseball through Junior Braves/RBI Baseball and the Carver YMCA Little League at the Atlanta Braves Baseball Academy.

The group also had lunch in the 755 Club.



ATLANTA BRAVES

BALLS & STRIKES

A The Braves Wives hosted their annual Brown Bag Bonanza at Turner Field Aug. 18. Baseballs autographed by current Braves players were on sale to fans for \$40 each. Buyers didn't know whose autograph they received until opening the bag after the purchase. Proceeds from the event benefited Anna's Angel Fund, Jaden's Ladder, and the Atlanta Braves Foundation.

IT LOOKS LIKE WE'RE IN FOR A THRILLING FINISH

THERE WAS A LOT OF TALK from the beginning of the season that the Mets were the team that would win the division, and most people thought they'd run away with it. I've been around the game long enough to know that predictions that are made in February and March don't usually reflect the standings in September.

Injuries happen to every team, and the teams in our division haven't been immune to them. We've had them, and so have the Mets and Phillies. Injuries are part of the unpredictability of baseball. You have to fill in and sometimes find a hidden treasure.

When we left spring training, Buddy Carlyle wasn't with us, but he pitched well. And when we needed him, we remembered him. He kept pitching well in Richmond, and are we glad we brought him up! He's one of the best stories in baseball.

Another pleasant surprise is the consistency of Kelly Johnson. We weren't really sure what we were going to get when we put him at second. He worked hard all winter, but second base is a very difficult position. We knew he would hit, but I think everyone's been pleased with what a smart hitter he is. He's got a solid, smart approach to hitting. His defense was better than we expected, and he's continued to improve all season.

Jeff Francoeur has improved in his approach to hitting, too. He understands that he doesn't need to try to hit it out of the park every time. He's taking more pitches and has cut down on his bad swings. He's sensational in those two-out-with-men-on situations.

Getting Mark Teixeira at the trade deadline was a big move. It's not often you're able to get a player like that, who makes an impact when you get him. But he's that kind of player. He's a gamer, loves to compete.

I think our team got a spark of excitement from him when he got here, and Chipper Jones started seeing some good pitches for a little while once Mark first got here.

Chipper has had another strong season. Even though he spent time on the DL, he came off the bench swinging and hasn't slowed down. He's on pace to hit 30 home runs and get 100 RBIs. If he stays healthy and we win this (division), you could make the case for him being the MVP. He's been that good and that important.

There have been a lot of great catches in Braves history, and Willie Harris' catch at Shea Stadium in August was one of the best ever. But I didn't even get to see it!

The dugout (at Shea) is so low that I'm "blind" sitting down there. You can usually tell by the body language of the hitter when he's running to first whether or not it's out, so I didn't even get up to look once I saw him heading to first.

Chino Cadahia was on the steps looking out there when the runner (Carlos Delgado) slowed down, and I thought, "He can't have caught it!" Just then, Chino turned around and said, "Willie caught it!"

I saw the catch later on all the replays. It was amazing. Willie's been great for us offensively and defensively.

By September 1, we will have brought up about three more pitchers. We want to have 15 pitchers total, and we'll definitely bring up a third catcher. We'll bring up some bench players, too, especially guys who can give us speed.

At this point, it looks like our fans are in for another fun September with a good pennant race.

IF (CHIPPER) STAYS HEALTHY AND WE WIN THIS (DIVISION), YOU COULD MAKE THE CASE FOR HIM BEING THE MVP.

POWER PACKED

Mark Teixeira Adds
Texas-Sized Home Run Pop
To Middle of Batting Order

TEX'S STATS

YEAR	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	AVG
2003	146	529	66	137	29	5	26	84	44	120	.259
2004	145	545	101	153	34	2	38	112	68	117	.281
2005	162	644	112	194	41	3	43	144	72	124	.301
2006	162	628	99	177	45	1	33	110	89	128	.282
CAREER	615	2,346	378	661	149	11	140	450	273	489	.282

And lo, it came to pass on the final day of July in the year 2007 that a savior was delivered unto the Atlanta Braves, a prodigal son who had ventured far afield and returned triumphant...

OKAY, MAYBE the Aug. 1 arrival of Mark Teixeira from the Texas Rangers wasn't heralded with a chorus of trumpet-playing angels, but it almost seemed like it. Fans and players alike started speaking the words "World Series" and believing in them for the first time since, what, 2001?

The Braves scored double-digit runs in four straight games. Optimism flowed through Turner Field like beer in the all-you-can-eat section.

Oh, there were murmurs. Not many, true, but they had a consistent refrain: The Braves gave up too much to get Teixeira (pronounced: Tuh-SHARE-uh). He'll bolt as soon as he becomes a free agent. He's all about the money.

The real Teixeira naturally falls somewhere between savior and mercenary. Sure, he homered in his first three games in Atlanta, but as he noted the night of his arrival, "There are times I'm going to go 0-for-4. But hopefully there won't be many of those."

The 27-year-old Teixeira is such a good fit for the Cox/Schuerholz-style Braves that it's somewhat surprising it took him this long to get here.

He's got a demeanor as smooth as his swing. In his first press conference as a Brave, he glided easily from topics ranging from his hitting style and his expectations for the team to his charitable work and his days as a Georgia Tech Yellow Jacket. He even used "we" over and over to refer to a team whose uniform he'd worn for less than two hours.

But since Teixeira has played exactly six games against Atlanta during inter-league play, and since the Rangers never made the playoffs during his tenure there, most Atlanta fans know little about him beyond the fact that he was supposed to be a pretty good ballplayer over there in that other league.

So here's a quick primer on Teixeira's on-field exploits: He's only the fifth player in major league history to total at least 100 homers in his first three seasons. The others are Joe DiMaggio, Ralph Kiner, Braves Hall of Famer Eddie Mathews and Albert Pujols. Only Kiner, Pujols and Mathews hit more home runs in their first four seasons than the 140 homers that Teixeira hit in 2003-06.

Teixeira also is only the third switch-hitter in history to hit at least 20 homers in each of his first three seasons, joining Eddie Murray and some guy named Chipper. Teixeira's also a reigning two-time Gold Glove winner and two-time Silver Slugger who

started at first base for the American League All-Stars in 2005. No first baseman has ever won a Gold Glove while wearing a Braves uniform.

Okay, so the Braves got themselves a great ballplayer (plus lefty reliever Ron Mahay). They better have, considering how much potential talent they gave up (Jarrod Saltalamacchia and four minor leaguers including shortstop Elvis Andrus, righthander Neftali Feliz and lefthanders Matt Harrison and Beau Jones). But what else can they expect from Teixeira?

"I'm going to play hard, play every day," said the 6-3, 220-pound Teixeira, who played in all 162 games each of the last two years for Texas. "I'll hopefully help Chipper out [in the batting order] by getting him some pitches to hit.

I want to drive in some runs myself, hit a few home runs, and play Gold Glove defense. Even when you're not swinging the bat well, you can always play good defense."

Atlanta fans will also no doubt be pleased to know that Teixeira's as much a reliable force in the clubhouse and the community as he is between the foul lines.

"He's got a great head on his shoulders," said Danny Hall, Teixeira's baseball coach at Georgia Tech. "And I don't just say that because he was an Academic All-American. He makes his mind up, he gets goal-oriented, and he'll do what it takes to stay on the path to achieve that goal."

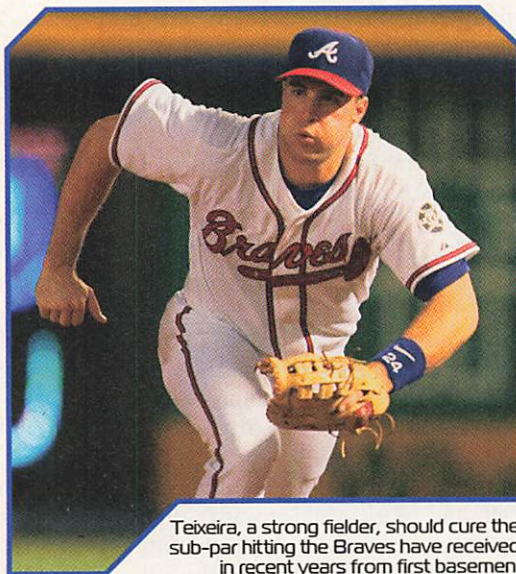
During his years at Tech, Teixeira glowed with the kind of promise only future stars possess. A first-team high school All-American even before he arrived in Atlanta from Baltimore, he quickly amassed a string of honors, including the National College Baseball Player of the Year in 2000. To this day, Hall can effortlessly call up memories of Teixeira's most amazing moments.

"I remember a tournament at Rice in his junior year," Hall said. "This was early in the season. He was hitting against a pitcher who was projected to go in the first round of the draft. And he hit a home run so far into the trees that it silenced the crowd. It wasn't just how

far it went, it was how quick it got there, and the sound he made when he hit it."

In 2001, his third and final year at Tech, Teixeira averaged .427, with an astronomical .772 slugging percentage. Barely two years later, he was in the majors, one of the few bright spots on an otherwise woeful Rangers club that never finished higher than third in its four-team division while he was there.

Teixeira has taken some heat for turning down a reported eight-year, \$140 million contract offer from the Rangers earlier



Teixeira, a strong fielder, should cure the sub-par hitting the Braves have received in recent years from first basemen.

FILLING A VOID

Regular Braves first basemen since Fred McGriff (1993-97) and Andres Galarraga (1998, 2000).

		HR	RBI	AVG
1999	Ryan Klesko	21	80	.297
2001	Rico Brogna	3	21	.248
2002	Julio Franco	6	30	.284
2003	Robert Fick	11	80	.269
2004	Adam LaRoche	13	45	.278
2005	Adam LaRoche	20	78	.259
2006	Adam LaRoche	32	90	.285

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RED SOX CHANGED ME INTO A PITCHER IN 1996

I DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE that my second career save was in 1999 for Tim Hudson in Oakland! It's funny that Huddy and I are teammates now, because we didn't really hang out together back then. He was a starter, and I was a reliever. He hung out with the rest of the starters, and we bullpen guys stuck together.

I was an outfielder all my life (signed in 1991) until I joined Boston in 1996. The only time I pitched was maybe to come in and pitch one inning. Technically, I was an outfielder.

But they seemed to think it would be in my best interest to make me a pitcher, in the bullpen, because I threw pretty hard. When I started to pitch, I had to get some work under my belt. I needed to get some innings.

When I made the switch to pitching, I was pretty close to having good mechanics. It was just a matter of learning an off-speed pitch. They kept me in Florida for an extra week just to learn another pitch before I went to join my team.

I started in the Florida State League, and it went from there. It ended up being a pretty quick transition. I made it back up a year and half later. The following June (1997), I got called up.

At the time, I didn't think whether or not I was ready to pitch at the major league level. I just wanted to make it back up there. That was my goal, and it all came together.

When I went to Oakland (1999) at mid-season, they had the idea of putting me in a starting spot. I finished the year in Vancouver and got some starts. I was used to going four, five or six innings.

In 2000, I went to spring training as a starter, and Mark Mulder wasn't quite ready to come up yet, so I was the fifth starter for Oakland. At that time, as the fifth

starter, I had a lot of rest between starts, because the off days seemed to fall on my start days.

There were stretches where I didn't work for 10 days. I got one or two starts before Mulder was called up and I was moved to the bullpen. I was fine about that.

Being here, at the major league level, was just a dream come true. It still is. This was my ultimate goal, and I would do anything - start, close, middle relief, whatever - to stay up here. I've done everything from going in when a pitcher's struggled in the third or fourth inning to closing.

Last year, I had a career-high 62 innings, and when I think back to last year, I think I started feeling it around August. But I'm used to getting up and down a lot in the bullpen. Usually, if we get up and start throwing, we're going in, so there isn't a lot of wasted energy warming up.

I've been, knock wood, pretty healthy. I was on the DL earlier this season with a ribcage injury, but I don't have as many miles on my arm as the kids here. I call them kids because I'm 36 years old and most of them are about 25 or 26. Those guys have a lot more miles on their arms.

When I was an outfielder, all I did was play long toss. I didn't have to worry about sliders or changeups. That's even more strain on your arm.

Mark Teixeira and I heard the rumors about being traded either to the Braves or some other club. At my age, I was just excited to be mentioned in a deal with a young, good player like Mark. I'm old enough to be his oldest brother!

It was my first time being traded with another player, involved in a seven-player deal. It made me feel good that I had done enough to put myself in a position to go to a club and help them out - especially a place like Atlanta where they've won so much.

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

this year. But to hear Teixeira tell it, the issue was more a matter of loyalty than one of dollars.

"The team had talked early in the season about how we were building a foundation," Teixeira said. "But when I got back [from a month-long stint on the disabled list], my name was in all the trade talk. That told me where I stood."

Atlanta fans likewise know where he stands, for now and 2008. But how about beyond that? Could the Braves have mortgaged their long-term future for just two shots at post-season success? And what are the odds that the Braves could even resign Teixeira, who's represented by noted hardball agent Scott Boras? It's a topic Teixeira won't get near until the time comes, preferring to keep the spotlight on the team rather than any individual.

"I don't want contract talk or long-term talk to get in the way of what we're doing here," he said. "I saw it in Texas, where contract talk starts to get in the way of things. I want the focus to be on the 25 guys in here trying to win the division and win a World Series."

Teixeira already knows several of his new teammates well. He played with Chipper Jones and Jeff Francoeur during last year's World Baseball Classic. Teixeira has admired Chipper's game since high school, when he too was a switch-hitting third baseman.

"He's not that much older than me, but that makes him feel old," Teixeira said with a laugh. "I wore number 10 in [American] Legion ball because of Chipper. I was excited for a lot of reasons to come to Atlanta, but one of them certainly was a chance to play with Chipper."

For their part, Chipper and the rest of the Braves are just as excited to play with Teixeira. At the trade deadline, players beamed with delight and dared to talk big in a way players don't often do.

"We've got the team to win the World Series," Brian McCann said on the day of Teixeira's arrival, and his teammates echoed the expectation.

Teixeira sees that expectation as an opportunity, not a burden.

"Playing in Texas, we didn't have a lot of winning seasons," Teixeira said. "By the middle of the season, you were, unfortunately, just playing for pride. Here, I get a chance to play for a World Series, which is everyone's dream. Being in pennant race, being in great city like Atlanta - you can't ask for a better situation."



THE STOPPER

SOUL SEARCHING AND NEW COMMITMENT MAKE **HUDSON** AN ACE ONCE AGAIN

BY JON COOPER

THE GENERAL QUIET of the Braves clubhouse was suddenly shattered by a shout from the direction of Tim Hudson's locker. The scream was uncharacteristic of Hudson, but on this August afternoon, this particular loss was too much to take quietly.

The loss in question didn't come to the Phillies, Mets or any other team in the majors. It didn't even involve baseball.

The noise barely caused a ripple among the throng of reporters and television crews a few lockers over, talking with the Braves' newest arrival, Mark Teixeira. But Hudson was determined to be heard.

"The big news: Oscar [Villarreal] finally, finally, **FINALLY** beat me at Casino," shouted Hudson, breaking into a big grin. "There's your big news of the day."

That Hudson's reaction wasn't out of frustration and came before that day's game had even started was a sign of the times for the 32-year-old who's in his third season as a Brave.

"He's kind of the class clown of the clubhouse," said Chipper Jones. "He's really a happy-go-lucky, lighthearted, spirited person in the clubhouse, off the field. You could see that [last season] was taking its toll on him. He was more reserved, a little quieter. But he's back to his old self."

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ATLANTA BRAVES

The same can be said of Hudson when he's on the mound.

Following his Aug. 4 start (seven shutout innings vs. Colorado), Hudson was leading the Braves in wins (12), starts (24), quality starts (18), and ERA (2.95, down almost two runs from his bloated 4.86 ERA of 2006). He also ranked among National League leaders in starts, innings (158 2/3), ERA, wins, winning percentage (.706), road ERA (2.77), night ERA (2.91) and fewest walks per nine innings (2.1).

"It's good to feel like I'm back to normal," said Hudson, who didn't earn his 12th win in 2006 until Sept. 8. "Last year was really frustrating for me."

Nightmarish 2006 saw Hudson finish 13-12, the first double-digit-loss season of his eight-year career. While he tied for the major league lead in starts (35) and was among NL leaders in innings (218 1/3), he also was among NL leaders in hits allowed (235), runs allowed (129), earned runs allowed (118) and walks (79).

"It's all about expectations," said Jones. "Guys that were here when he signed expected him to be somewhat dominant. He expects himself to go out there and give our team a chance to win every time out."

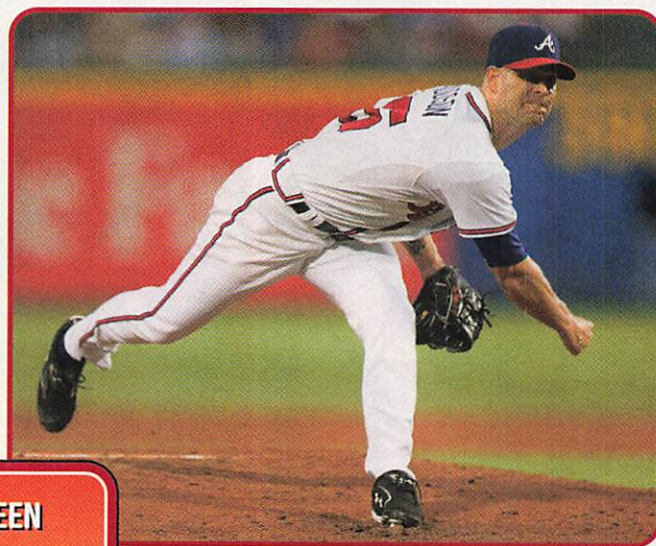
John Smoltz believes Hudson ratcheted up expectations in 2006 by saying before the start of the season that he wanted to take some of the pressure off Smoltz.

snowballed so badly," he recalled.

"This is a game of confidence," Jones said. "If you don't throw your pitches with conviction, you're going to get hit, and you're going to get hurt."

Hudson agrees.

"It's a game - 90 percent of it is played between the ears," he said. "It's confidence, and it's a mental side that's hard to tame sometimes. Last year it was kind of tough to deal with."



IT'S A GAME - 90 PERCENT OF IT IS PLAYED BETWEEN THE EARS... IT'S CONFIDENCE, AND IT'S A MENTAL SIDE THAT'S HARD TO TAME SOMETIMES. LAST YEAR IT WAS KIND OF TOUGH TO DEAL WITH.

"I think it was a natural progression of the way you come into this game knowing, 'I want to contribute. I want to do even more than I did in Oakland.' Especially coming to an organization that had always won," Smoltz said.

As the Braves painfully watched their division title streak end, Hudson labored, trying to regain his American League form while pitching through a left oblique strain. It was the same injury that disabled him for two weeks with Oakland in 2004 and a month with Atlanta in 2005. He refused to use the oblique as an excuse, but Jones, who battled through a similar injury, believes it was a factor.

"It is not an injury that's going to go away in the four days in between starts," said Jones. "He kept trying to pitch with it, and it never got any better. That's why he struggled. That's why he didn't have the velocity we were accustomed to seeing."

Hudson admitted that for the first time in his career, he lost confidence in his ability.

"There were times when I knew something was wrong and I thought I could fix it, and it was just one of those things that it



Even tougher was his perception that he had lost his teammates.

"I could look around and see that people didn't have a whole lot of confidence in me when I was out there pitching," he said.

"The guys in here were pulling for me as much as anybody, but I could tell whenever it was my time to pitch, guys were ready to run down balls in the gap," he added with a laugh. "I felt bad for Andruw a lot of games. I'm looking out there and he looks like a greyhound out there running in the gap after balls. That's not something that I enjoyed seeing, and I made a commitment that I wasn't going to let it happen again."

It hasn't. As in 2006, Hudson ranks among NL leaders in starts and innings, but he's also become a bona fide Cy Young Award candidate and the stopper of the Braves' staff. He was 4-0 with a 0.99 ERA in his first five starts after the All-Star break and was 8-1 with a 2.01 ERA in 12 starts following a Braves' loss (through Aug. 5).

A key part of the resurgence is the fact that he's not giving up home runs. Through his first 24 starts, he allowed only four homers, with a major league-best ratio of 0.24 homers per nine



innings. Hudson allowed 45 in his previous two seasons in Atlanta.

"Last year, I gave up a ton of home runs (25) and they weren't just solo home runs. That's going to happen whenever you start falling behind in the count and start nibbling a lot," he said. "I was going out there trying to be too fine, falling behind in the count and then serving up a cookie. This year, I've been aggressive in the strike zone. I've tried to pound the strike zone as much as I can."

Hudson's commitment to pounding the strike zone followed an off-season of pounding weights.

"I went to the gym every day, and I wouldn't leave until I felt like I had really gotten some work done," he said. "It's pretty easy to go in there and go through the motions and walk out of there not feeling like you've really worked as hard as you can and then going to the golf course. You have to come out of there feeling physically tired, like you've physically worked."

There's no doubt that his sinkerball is working.

"His sinker is dynamic this year," raved Smoltz. "It's staying down. It's a hard pitch to hit. Last year, he would admit that it got up in too many situations, and it cost him. Now it's just dirty. It's as good as anybody's sinker in the game."

Hudson is getting groundball outs better than almost everybody in the game, as his 308 groundouts (through Aug. 5) were the second-most in the majors (only Colorado's Aaron Cook had more) and he had a near-3:1 ratio of groundouts to flyouts.

No longer beholden to expectations (real or perceived), free and clear of injury, and at home with his home team, Hudson is all business - and business is good.

"He knows that whenever he takes the mound he's giving us a great opportunity to win," said Jones. "Having that swagger hopefully will rub off on his teammates, because it used to be commonplace around here. A lot of people had that swagger that we knew we were going to go out and win on a given day, and it all starts with that day's starting pitcher."

"He's had some injuries," said Smoltz. "I think those are past him, and he's been a dominant pitcher for us. He went back to a work ethic and a mindset of, 'I'm going to go out there and go back to the way I always used to pitch.' We're definitely seeing that. He's carried the load of innings, and he has been the guy you want on the mound when it matters."

CARDS HAVE NO PLANS FOR ANKIEL TO PITCH

ANYONE THINKING that outfielder **Rick Ankiel** might one day return to the mound and serve the Cardinals as both a pitcher and hitter, forget it. One rival scout raised that possibility to his general manager, envisioning Ankiel as a superior version of **Brooks Kieschnick**, who filled both roles for the Brewers in 2003 and '04. Cardinals assistant GM **John Mozeliak** all but replied, "No chance." "His passion is to get back to the major-league level as a position player," Mozeliak said. "That is where his heart lies. That is what he has been groomed to do."

A scout who recently saw the Diamondbacks isn't buying into the success of closer **Jose Valverde**, calling him, "a ticking time bomb - **Mitch Williams** (known as "Wild Thing" with the Phillies in the early '90s)." The same scout had a far more positive impression of Arizona rookie right-fielder **Justin Upton**. "He has bat speed like a young **Moises Alou**," the scout said. "He whistles that thing through the zone."

Phillies leftfielder **Pat Burrell** cleared waivers just as he was in the midst of a stunning revival. Burrell batted .215 prior to the All-Star break, but since then, his on-base/slugging percentage is among the highest in the National League. Phils manager **Charlie Manuel** - who is starting to look like a Manager of the Year candidate - recently moved Burrell into the No. 3 spot in the batting order.

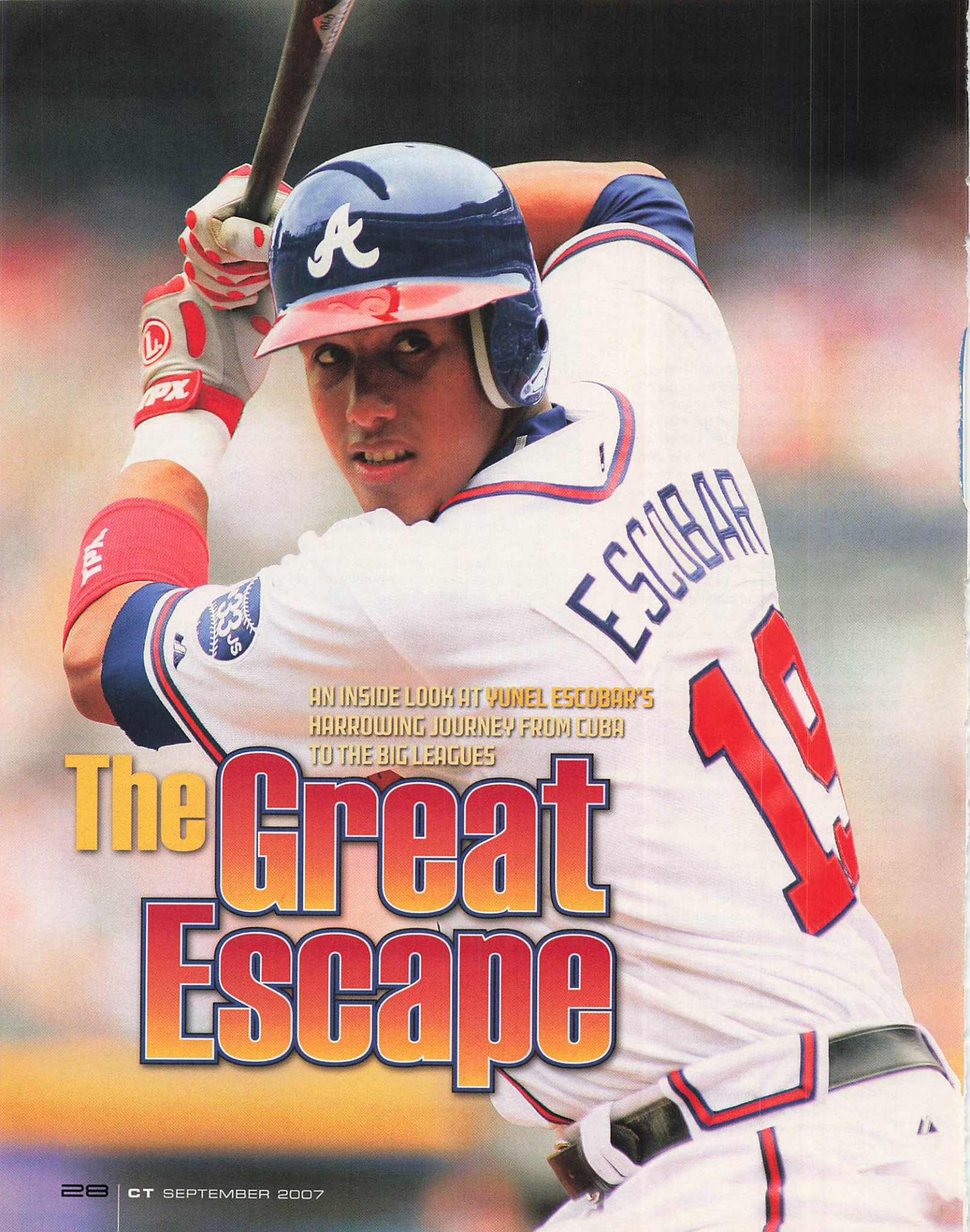
Based on their trade discussions with the Dodgers about righthander **Joe Blanton**, the A's are worried long-term about shortstop **Bobby Crosby** and third baseman **Eric Chavez**. The A's asked the Dodgers about two shortstop prospects, **Chin-Lung Hu** and **Ivan DeJesus Jr.**, and two third basemen, **Andy LaRoche** and **Blake DeWitt**, among others.

The Yankees turned down a chance to trade **Kyle Farnsworth** for **Bob Wickman** because the Braves wanted them to pay more than 70 percent of Farnsworth's remaining salary. The move would have cost them more than \$5 million, but it would have been in the Yankees' best interests. The always erratic Farnsworth appears finished in New York, and the trade would have amounted to addition by subtraction.

The Tigers might want to think twice about exercising **Ivan Rodriguez's** \$13 million option for next season. Rodriguez turns 36 on Nov. 30, and since the All-Star break, his on-base percentage is among the lowest in the American League. If the Tigers do bring back Pudge, they will need to play **Mike Rabelo** more or find a stronger backup. **Vance Wilson** underwent season-ending elbow surgery at the end of spring training.

Buddy Bell's planned resignation at the end of the season makes the Royals the third club that is uncertain about its manager in 2008, along with the Reds and Orioles. A half-dozen other jobs, including the Yankees' and Astros', could open at the end of the season. The Royals' position will be more attractive than many would expect. The team is above .500 since mid-May.

- KEN ROSENTHAL IS A SENIOR WRITER FOR FOXSPORTS.COM



AN INSIDE LOOK AT YUNEL ESCOBAR'S
HARROWING JOURNEY FROM CUBA
TO THE BIG LEAGUES

The Great Escape

The first thing many ballplayers do as soon as they sign a pro contract is use all, or part, of any bonus they receive to buy a flashy car or pickup truck. Yunel Escobar used \$20,000 of his bonus in a rather different manner. He had to pay the men who smuggled him out of Cuba and into the United States in October 2004.

It was a small price to pay for freedom and the chance to play professional baseball.

"He knew his life was over in Cuba," said Minerva, Yunel's wife of three years and Cuban expatriate herself since 1994. "He was suspended from playing for the (Cuban) National team because they believed he would try to defect. They were right."

Escobar, 24, was called up from the Mississippi Braves to Atlanta on June 2, when Chipper Jones went on the disabled list, even though he'd played just one full season of pro ball (2006 at Mississippi where he hit .264). Despite his youth and inexperience, he played well, brilliantly at times, and earned a spot on the bench.

Then when Edgar Renteria went on the disabled list Aug. 3, Escobar took over as the everyday shortstop. His maturity on the field surprised many, but those who know what he'd already been through in his young life weren't surprised in the least.

On Oct. 6, 2004, less than one month shy of his 22nd birthday, Escobar, five other baseball players, and 30 additional passengers climbed aboard a 25-foot boat bound for Florida. That's 36 people on a boat that normally has a capacity of 12.

The plans for his escape had been months, even years, in the making.

Escobar was 20 years old, living in Cuba and unable to play baseball in 2003 when he met Minerva, who was visiting her grandmother and sister in Cuba.

"We had beautiful chemistry," said Minerva, who worked at a Miami area hospital and attended college with plans to go into nursing. "We talked together as if we'd known each other for years. He wasn't looking to fall in love with someone."

Escobar confided that he wanted to leave Cuba, and Minerva said she would do what she could to help. Upon her return to Florida, Minerva made contact with men who said they would bring Escobar to the U.S. by boat for \$20,000.

"I thought, 'I can't do that!'" recalled Minerva, who speaks excellent English. "That's what I make in one year!"

She was told that if Escobar was able to get a group of players to join him, the men would bring them to the U.S. - but they would have to stay in the smugglers' home until the money was paid. Minerva conveyed the message to Escobar, who said, "Don't worry. I'll get the other players."

Escobar rounded up five players - pitchers Yamel Guevara, Jose Angel Cordero Valdez, Rafael Galbizo Figueroa and outfielders Yoel Perez Mendieta and Yoan Limonta Zayas - and made the arrangements. Then came a period of waiting. In August 2004, Minerva returned to Cuba for her annual visit.

"We had everything settled," said Minerva. "Yunel knew he was coming, but it couldn't happen until October because of the weather."

It was the last time they saw each other before his escape, and Yunel made a proposal.

"He said, 'Let's get married,'" said Minerva, her eyes welling with tears at the memory. "He knew he was going

to leave and he said, 'I don't know what's going to happen to me. I just want to be married to you.'"

They married in a civil ceremony on Aug. 9, 2004. Minerva was in Cuba for nine more days before returning to Florida.

"I was sick for two days, I was so worried," she said.

And her parents were astonished by her decision.

"They weren't very happy that we had gotten married," she said. "My family in Cuba told my mom, 'He's a good guy,' but she wasn't happy about it. My father was more relaxed with it. He said I'd always been very mature and made good decisions, but my mother was upset."

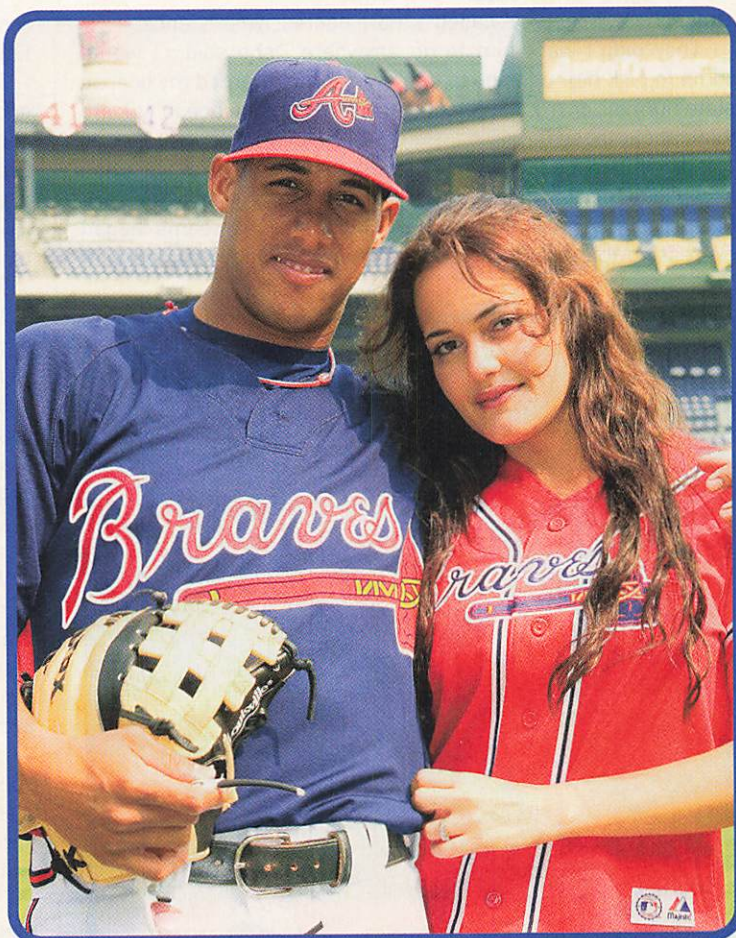
Finally, two months after his secret wedding, Escobar and his fellow players began their clandestine journey.

"We met (Oct. 6), all the six baseball players, and rode for about 12 hours from Havana just to get to the location of the boat," he related through an interpreter. "There were 36 people on the boat. It took two days on the ocean."

The exact distance of the route is unknown, but at their closest points, the U.S. and Cuba are roughly 90 miles apart. It's been described as the "longest 90 miles on earth."

Escobar said they didn't pack water or food, thinking their trip might only take a few hours or one day at the most.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



When Yunel proposed to Minerva before his daring escape to the U.S., he said, "I don't know what's going to happen to me. I just want to be married to you."

"There were some people who had water, but they were the people with young children," he said. "The trip ended up being two days, and it caught us by surprise. All the rations went to the kids before anyone else."

The smugglers landed on a small, uninhabited island off the coast of Florida at one o'clock in the morning. They dropped off the exhausted passengers and left.

"We slept there that night, and the next day we just waved until someone came by and saw us," said Escobar.

The U.S. Coast Guard was notified, and the group was picked up a short time later.

They were very fortunate to be on that island. Under a 1995 U.S./Cuba policy informally known as "wet-foot, dry-foot", Cuban migrants who are intercepted at sea ("wet feet") are sent back to Cuba or to a third country. But those who make it to U.S. soil ("dry feet") are allowed to remain. In 2004, the Coast Guard interdicted 1,225 Cubans attempting to enter the U.S. The number for 2007 has nearly doubled.

Once they were released from immigration, Escobar and the other players went to live in a house with the men who made the arrangements for them to come to Florida until they were able to pay the smugglers' fee. Though Escobar speaks of a family-like atmosphere, Minerva recalled a more oppressive existence.

"They didn't want him to go anywhere," she said. "I would come to pick him up to go to dinner, and they wanted my license plate number or my cell phone number. I think he doesn't like to think about those days."

It didn't take long for word to get out that six Cuban players had escaped to the U.S. in the largest mass desertion of players since Fidel Castro's revolution in 1959. Major league teams began expressing interest in the players, some of whom signed with

agents and established residency in a third country.

"When I first got here, I didn't know that I was going to get drafted. I just wanted to play," said Escobar. "(Major League Baseball) wanted me to go to the Dominican Republic to play, but I said, 'No, it was too difficult getting here. I don't want to play there.'"

He asked what his options were and was told that in order to get a tryout, he had to apply for the (2005) draft, which he did. The Braves took him in the second round (75th overall).

Fifteen days prior to the draft, Escobar participated in a tryout with a number of teams watching. Most teams didn't know much about the young infielder, but the Braves had the advantage of reliable, first-hand information from catcher Brayan Pena (cur-

THERE WERE SOME PEOPLE WHO HAD WATER, BUT THEY WERE THE PEOPLE WITH YOUNG CHILDREN. THE TRIP ENDED UP BEING TWO DAYS, AND IT CAUGHT US BY SURPRISE. ALL THE RATIONS WENT TO THE KIDS BEFORE ANYONE ELSE.

rently at Richmond), a longtime friend and former teammate of Escobar who defected from Cuba in 2000.

"The Braves spoke to Brayan about my character, like a reference," he said. "I guess they knew I was a good person through him, and I was able to impress them in the tryout. I was picked by the Braves and was so happy. This was the team I wanted to play for!"

Upon signing with the Braves and receiving his bonus (\$475,000), Escobar was able to pay the \$20,000 he owed and truly began his new life in America with his wife by his side.

"He went to Orlando (extended spring training), then to (rookie level) Danville, Virginia," said Minerva. "He wanted me with him, but I was going to school, working at the same time. I had worked there for six years. I had to give them notice."

It was a week before Minerva was able to make the 17-hour drive to Danville. Two days later, Yunel was promoted to the Class-A Rome Braves. He hit a combined .325 in his first pro exposure.

"It was a crazy time!" Minerva said. "I knew nothing about baseball life."

While focusing on baseball, Escobar had another mission in mind. That was to get the rest of his family - father, Mariano, mother, Mariluz, and younger sister, Yunay, 10, out of Cuba. He filed political asylum paperwork with immigration and hoped that his high-profile departure wouldn't jeopardize the rest of the family's chances to get out.

In 2006, his father was approved, and was allowed to bring Yunay, a minor child. But Mariluz was not approved. The family discussed their options and decided that Mariano and Yunay should leave as soon as possible with the hope that Mariluz would soon follow.

"We didn't know it would take so long to get my mother out," said Escobar.

Mariano and Yunay flew from Cuba to Miami in January 2007 and began settling into the four-bedroom house the Escobars bought, less than five minutes from Brayan Pena and his family.



Escobar platooned at second base until he took over for the injured Edgar Renteria at shortstop in early August.

ATLANTA BRAVES



ATLANTA BRAVES

Escobar displayed his uncommon composure and savvy at Arizona July 27 when he stole second base in the ninth while closer Jose Valverde was holding the ball and not watching him.

Yunay attended fifth grade and quickly picked up English.

"She's learning fast, and she knows more [English] than her brother!" said Minerva with a laugh. But she added, "There were days in Miami when I was taking care of (Yunay) that she was so sad. She missed her mother. I wouldn't tell Yunel this. He would have worried, and he needed to concentrate on the game."

The adjustment was difficult for Mariano, too.

"He had so many friends in Cuba," Minerva said. "You can always go out, walk, and see people. He's still getting adjusted, but he's fine."

The whole family remained on edge, waiting to hear from Mariluz in Cuba. Even before his mother's second request for amnesty was denied, Escobar had made a decision: He would pay for her to leave Cuba.

"He told me, 'I'm not going to lose any more time (with my mother),'"

Though the Escobars prefer to keep the specific details private, sometime in early June, Yunel's mother caught a flight from Cuba to Venezuela. Though she was supposed to stay in Venezuela for a week at the most, she was stranded there for 20 days. The money she took with her from Cuba was nearly gone before she finally got a flight for Panama - and from there to Guatemala. At that point, Escobar's mother took a bus over 900 miles through Mexico to the U.S. border at McAllen, Texas.

"She was calling us all along the way," said Minerva.

After 36 hours on a bus, Mariluz reached the border on July 10 and was released by immigration a day later, free to fly to Atlanta to meet her family.

"We sent her some money by Western Union to buy a plane ticket," said Minerva.

And on July 12, Escobar, accompanied by his wife and sister,

was reunited with his mother at Atlanta's Hartsfield Jackson International Airport.

"She was waiting for us in baggage claim," said Minerva. "We were hugging and crying, but not Yunel. He was just looking at her. He couldn't take his eyes off her."

Escobar was in shock, he said.

"It was very special for me. We hadn't seen each other in so long," he added. "It was a very happy time, and it was a little sad, too, because she looked a little different than what I expected."

On the way to the car, holding his mother in his arms, the shock wore off and finally, he cried.

The next night, the Escobar family was in the stands at Turner Field and Mariluz watched her son pinch-hit in a game against the Pittsburgh Pirates. She was there the entire weekend series and again the following Monday when Escobar hit leadoff and started the game at second base. Despite the 10-3 loss to the Cincinnati Reds, Escobar had a memorable night, going 3-for-4. The next day, Minerva drove Mariluz and Yunay to Miami where Mariluz was reunited with her husband.

Adjustments continue for the family. Mariluz enjoys keeping house in Miami, Yunay has started sixth grade, and Mariano is meeting more people. They look forward to even more family time this off-season, although Escobar may play winter ball in Mexico. Minerva wants to have a wedding rededication ceremony now that the family is all together again.

"We've said we'll do it in November, but we have to plan so many things!" she said. "I really want a wedding, and so does my mom! I wish I could pick a date and then just walk in and everything would be ready."

But Minerva said the most important thing to her is that her husband is happy here.

HE'S BEEN THROUGH A LOT TO COME TO THIS COUNTRY, AND HE'S ALREADY BEEN SUCCESSFUL... HE THOUGHT HE'D BE IN THE MINOR LEAGUES FOR FOUR OR FIVE YEARS, BUT HE'S COME TO ATLANTA SO FAST.
- MINERVA ESCOBAR

"He signed right away, he got a good bonus, and we were able to buy a house right away," she said. "Our life is our dream coming true... bringing his family here... his story is incredible."

"He's been through a lot to come to this country, and he's already been successful. He wanted to be signed by the Braves, his team, with Brayan, and it happened. He thought he'd be in the minor leagues for four or five years, but he's come to Atlanta so fast."

Escobar conceded his biggest barrier since arriving isn't playing baseball or even the Cuban government.

"The language will always be the biggest barrier!" he said. "The roadways and the traffic, I'm not used to that, but I'll learn from doing it over time."

Escobar's next goal is to become a U.S. citizen. The paperwork is already in the works, and it's just a matter of time. But one thing is certain - Escobar has shown he's willing to do anything to make his dreams come true.

Braves
VIVID

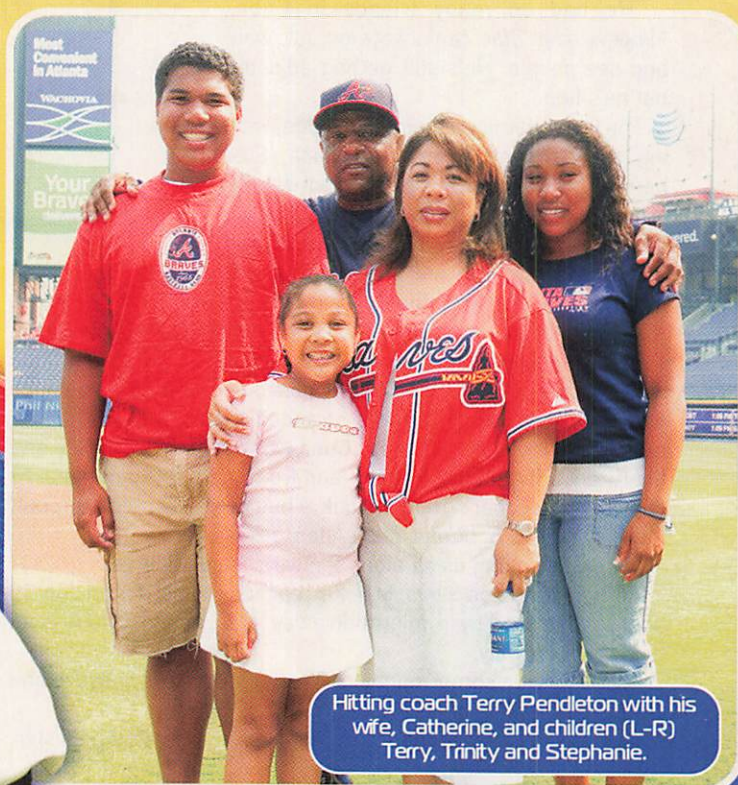
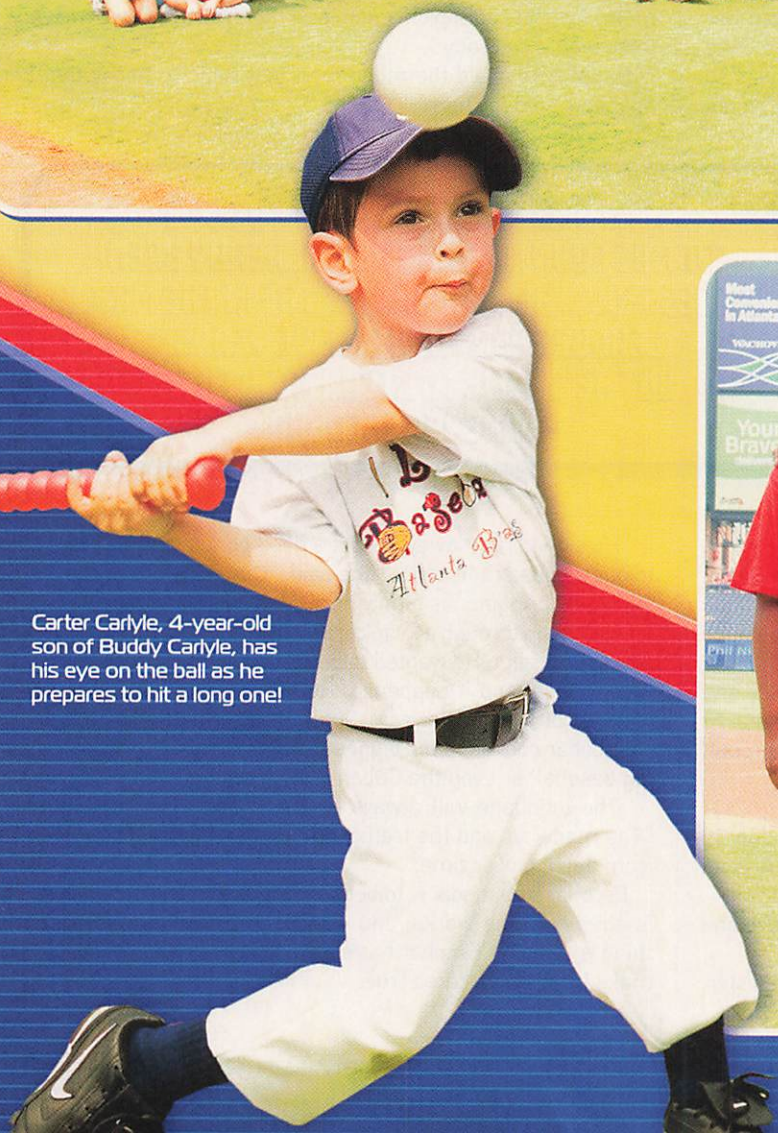
FAMILY DAY

PHOTOS BY ALLISON SHIRREFFS

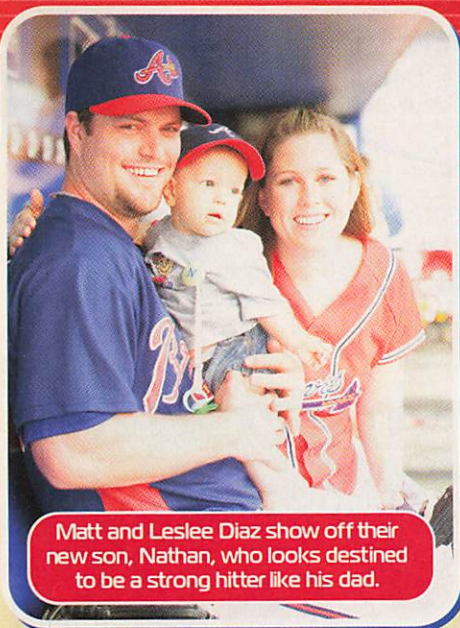


The gang's all here! In an annual tradition, the players and staff allowed their children and wives to take over the field prior to the Aug. 5 game.

Carter Carlyle, 4-year-old son of Buddy Carlyle, has his eye on the ball as he prepares to hit a long one!



Hitting coach Terry Pendleton with his wife, Catherine, and children (L-R) Terry, Trinity and Stephanie.



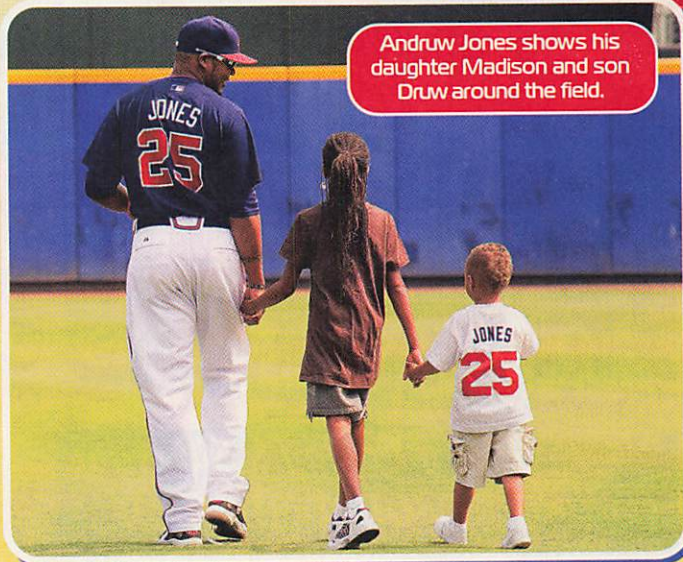
Matt and Leslee Diaz show off their new son, Nathan, who looks destined to be a strong hitter like his dad.



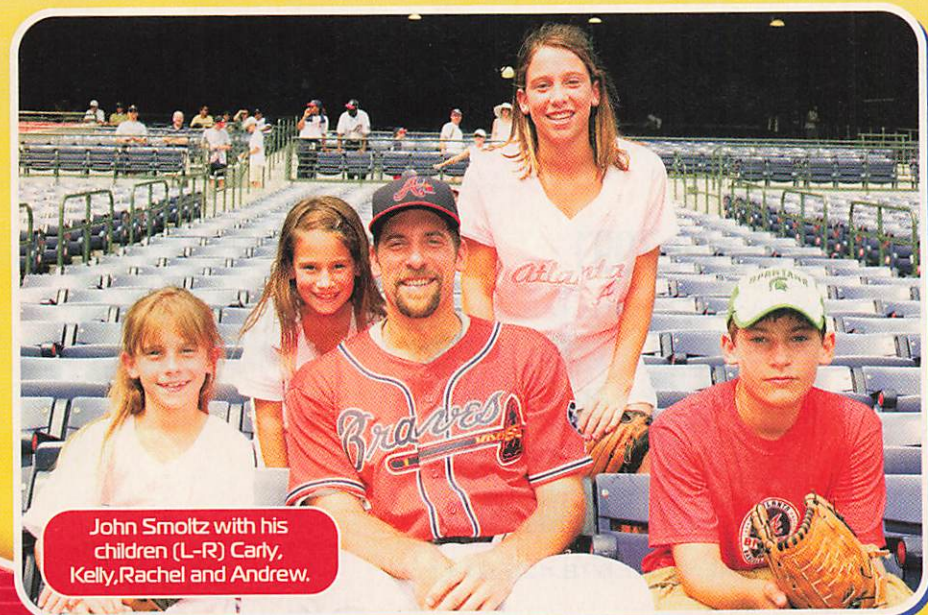
(L-R) Brian McCann, Kelly Johnson and Jeff Francoeur with their brides-to-be, Ashley Jarusinski, Lauren Thacker and Catie McCoy.



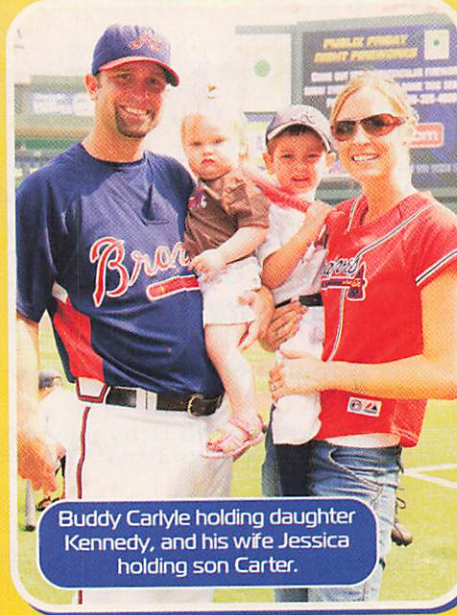
The Hudson clan (L-R, back) Kim, Kim's father, Harold Bruner, Tim's father, Ron, Tim's mother, Sue, and Kim's mother, Debbie Bruner; (front) children Kade, Tess and Kennedie with Tim.



Andrew Jones shows his daughter Madison and son Drew around the field.



John Smoltz with his children (L-R) Carly, Kelly, Rachel and Andrew.



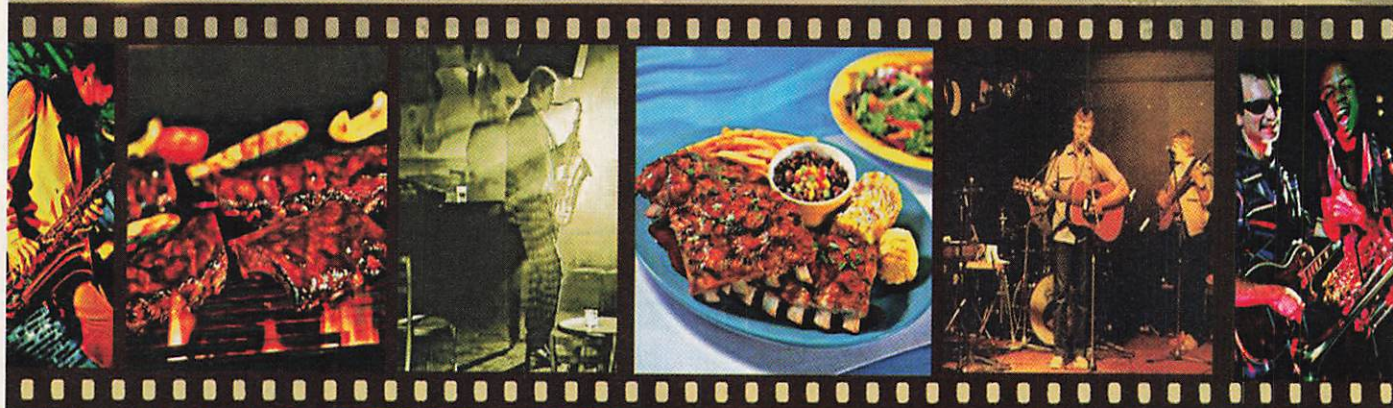
Buddy Carlyle holding daughter Kennedy, and his wife Jessica holding son Carter.

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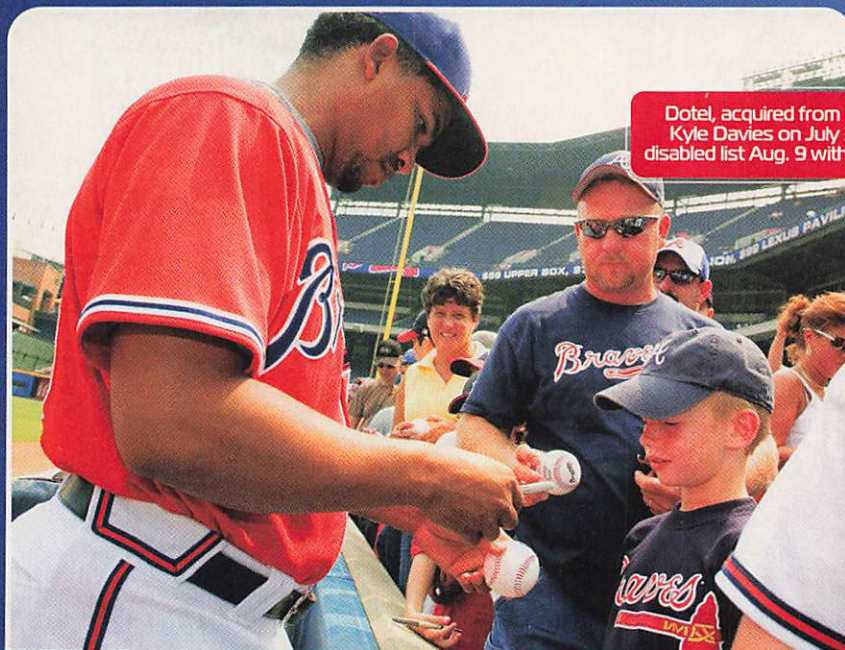
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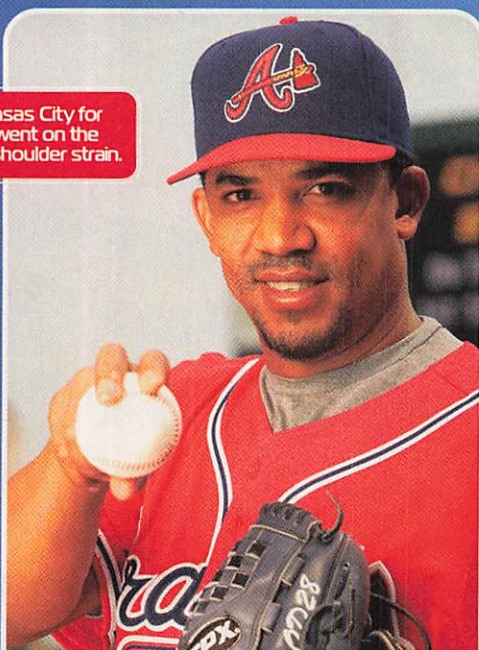
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Dotel, acquired from Kansas City for Kyle Davies on July 31, went on the disabled list Aug. 9 with a shoulder strain.



ALISON B. HARRIS

ADDED RELIEF

DOTEL BRINGS EXPERIENCE AND SUCCESS AS BOTH A SET-UP MAN AND CLOSER

BY MARK BOWMAN OF MLB.COM

TWO WINTERS AGO, while doing his post-Tommy John surgery rehab in Atlanta, Octavio Dotel would regularly tell his trainer that his dream to play for the Braves provided daily motivation during this grueling process.

When this dream wasn't realized via free agency this past off-season, Dotel wondered if it would ever come true. All of that wondering ceased on July 31, when the Braves obtained him from the Kansas City Royals in exchange for 23-year-old righthander Kyle Davies, who'd been demoted to Richmond.

"I talked to them in the off-season, but nothing came through," Dotel said. "Now I can say my dream comes true. I've always wanted to play for this club. I like all the good players they have here and all their years of winning."

When Dotel arrived at Turner Field for the first time as a Brave Aug. 1, he found himself in an energized clubhouse. The Braves' trade deadline acquisitions, which also included first baseman Mark Teixeira and left-handed relievers Ron Mahay and Royce Ring, significantly increased optimism and gave the Braves a belief they can make a run at the World Series.

"I'm here just to win," said Dotel, a 6-0, 210-pound product of the Dominican Republic. "That's the reason they brought me over here, and that's the reason I'm here."

Although he comes from Kansas City with respectable credentials, which include the fact that he converted 11 of 14 save opportunities this year, Dotel arrives without thoughts of unseating Bob Wickman as the closer.

"I understand they have the closer already on this team," Dotel said. "Even though I was the closer in K.C., it doesn't mean I need to come over here and be the closer. Wickman is the guy here. If one day, he's not available to pitch, it can be [Rafael] Soriano or myself."

For now, Bobby Cox says he'll use Dotel, Wickman and Soriano in interchangeable late-inning roles. But there's always a chance of injury or even that Wickman could be moved via a waiver-wire trade in August. If this were to occur, Dotel and Soriano both would be capable of handling the closer's role.

While pitching for the Astros and A's during the 2004 season, Dotel registered a career-high 36 saves, limited opponents to a .217 batting average, and registered 122 strikeouts in just 85 1/3 innings.

"He's great," said Tim Hudson, who played with Dotel in Oakland during that 2004 season. "He's got unbelievable stuff. He's an awesome guy with a great personality. He's always smiling. He's going to be a good guy to have around."

Dotel's status as one of the game's top closers was erased when he needed Tommy John surgery on June 7, 2005. He began that season as Oakland's closer but had to shut down after just 15 appearances. In his mind, it took nearly two full years to regain the same dominant stuff that he had before undergoing this elbow ligament transplant procedure.

While posting a 10.80 ERA and seeing opponents hit .383 against him during 14 appearances with the Yankees last year, Dotel knew he was limited. But when compiling a 3.94 ERA and limiting opponents to .264 batting average in 24 appearances with the Royals this year, the 33-year-old reliever gained a sense of returning to his pre-surgery form.

"I was trying to pitch and see [with the Yankees]," said Dotel, who has a career record of 39-32 with 82 saves (in 113 opportunities) and a 3.78 ERA. "But I knew in my mind that I didn't have my best. Even though I was throwing hard, I didn't have my consistency. Now, it's a big difference."

What didn't change during surgery and recovery is Dotel's big

HOW I MADE IT TO THE MAJORS

RENARDO LOWE

TBS DIRECTOR/BRAVES BASEBALL

league sense of humor.

Although he thought it would be in his best interest not to divulge any of his best pranks, Dotel confirmed Hudson's assessment, which was that he is a fun-loving character, who would provide benefits on and off the field.

"I do a lot of crazy stuff because I want people to know you have to enjoy the game," said Dotel, who debuted in 1999 with the Mets, primarily as a starter. "You can't put too much pressure on yourself when you play this game. The only time you need to feel pressure is when you are on the field playing."

Dotel showed promise early in his career. In 1998, he led all Double-A and Triple-A pitchers with a combined 200 strikeouts (167.2 innings) in the Mets' farm system. As a rookie, he was the winning pitcher in Game 5 of the 1999 NLCS when the Mets beat the Braves, 4-3, in 15 innings. He worked the final three innings of that game.

The Mets traded Dotel to Houston for the 2000 season, when he became the first pitcher in NL history to start as many as 15 games and save at least 15 in the same season. In 2001, Houston finally turned him into a full-time reliever May 4, and he excelled, posting ERAs of 2.66, 1.85 and 2.48 in 2001, 2002 and 2003, respectively. He led all major league relievers in strikeouts in 2001 (128) and 2002 (118), and his 83 appearances set an Astros record in 2002. In 2003, he was one of six Astros who combined to pitch a no-hitter against the Yankees.

In mid-2004, Dotel was involved in a three-way trade in which he wound up with Oakland as Hudson's teammate. Following surgery in mid-2005, he signed as a free agent with the Yankees and tried to work his way back, but it was too early. He worked just 10 innings in the majors, then after the season signed as a free agent with Kansas City where his 11 saves prior to the trade would seem to indicate a recovery.

When Teixeira arrived at Turner Field, he described Dotel as a pitcher he didn't like to face. Likewise, the right-handed reliever described his new first base teammate as a hitter he never liked to face.

The Braves are hoping their National League rivals develop these same thoughts during the final two months of the season.

"This team was good already, and now I think it's better, a lot better," Dotel said. "I have like eight years in the big leagues. I'm looking for a ring now."

BY STEVE FALL

BASEBALL GAMES move at a leisurely pace, but not for the director of a telecast. One play could require cutting from camera to camera several times in just a few seconds. Renardo Lowe makes sure it all goes smoothly.

"Baseball, of the three major sports, is the most intense for a director," said Lowe, who has worked on Braves telecasts for Turner Sports since 1995. "With all the other sports, if you follow the ball, you'll see almost all the action and scoring. In baseball, the scoring usually takes place away from the ball."

Lowe's responsibilities include audio, camera shots and graphics. He works primarily with the producer, as well as other crew members to orchestrate the telecast. While the producer deals more with content and storylines, the director focuses on the visual look of the broadcast.

"The director actually cuts the cameras for the live action," said Lowe, who grew up in Decatur, just outside Atlanta. "And I put in the graphics and the statistics that you see on the screen. Because baseball has so many variables, between pitches and batters you have to reestablish the situation and remind people of assignments."

Lowe usually arrives at the ballpark around 2:30 or 3 p.m. for a 7:30 start. He believes fans would be surprised to learn how much preparation goes into one telecast. For road games, the crew even researches details such as where the opposing team's general manager sits, in case they want to show him on camera.

"It takes hours and hours of logistical preparation and physical work from engineers and camera people to just get the game on," said Lowe, a lifelong Braves fan.

The 38-year-old Lowe graduated from Howard University in 1992 with a television production major. While attending college, he interned at Black Entertainment Television (BET). He also made some key connections during school that helped him break into sports. That led to part-time work on NFL games and other telecasts for CBS Sports.

Lowe discovered something that could help people hoping to land sports television jobs: He encountered many of the same people at each event. That later paid off for him.

Lowe moved back to Atlanta after college and started working for CNN in 1993. In the CNN Center food court, he spoke to a Turner Sports executive named John Wendell that he met earlier. Wendell passed Lowe's resume around his department, which led to a production assistant job with Turner Sports in 1994. A year later, he began working Braves games.

From 1995 through 2000, Lowe served as either a production assistant or the associate director for Braves baseball. After that, he started working more NBA games for Turner Sports and didn't do quite as much baseball. He also directs the studio updates with Mark Fein, and has worked on British Open coverage. While his position can be challenging, it doesn't feel like work for Lowe.

"I love baseball, basketball and football," he said. "I love sports. So to work in sports television is easy to me."



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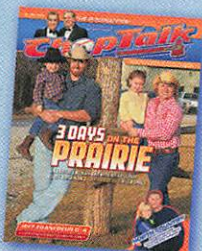
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TEIXEIRA PILING UP UNIQUE SWITCH-HITTER RESUME

BY STEVE FALL

WITH MARK TEIXEIRA joining Chipper Jones in the Braves' lineup, Bobby Cox has the rare luxury of two power-hitting switch-hitters.

Since the start of 2003 – when Teixeira first reached the majors with the Texas Rangers – he had the most home runs (155) of any switch-hitter (through Aug. 2). Jones ranked fourth (121) among switch-hitters in this time frame, trailing only Teixeira, Lance Berkman (143) and Carlos Beltran (140).

Teixeira's 155 homers tied him for 10th in the big leagues among all players since 2003. His 505 runs batted in placed ninth during that stretch.

Teixeira also owns the longest active streak of 25-home run seasons by a switch-hitter with four – a feat matched only nine times in history. If Teixeira reaches 25 homers this season, he'll join Mickey Mantle (9), Chipper Jones (7) and Jose Valentin (5) as the only switch-hitters with at least five straight years at this level. He's already one of only two switch-hitters to start his career with four 25-homer campaigns. Hall of Famer Eddie Murray (1977-80) is the other.

The new Braves first baseman already holds the all-time RBI mark (144) by a switch-hitter in a season (2005). He entered this year with three straight 110-RBI campaigns. Only Murray (4) managed a longer streak among all switch-hitters in history.

Just three switch-hitters managed more home runs through their age-27 season than Teixeira, who had nearly two months to pad his total of 155. Mantle leads the way with 280 homers, followed by Murray (198) and Ruben Sierra (178). Jones ranks fifth with 153 home runs through age 27.



Tim Hudson has bounced back strong after the only off-year of his fine career.

Hudson's 2007 performance has run his career record to 130-65 (.667 winning percentage). Just eight other pitchers had at least 130 wins and a .665 winning percentage through their age-31 season (determined by age on July 1). Five of them –



Teixeira, watching another long one leave the park, owns the all-time season record for RBIs by a switch-hitter (144 in 2005).

Christy Mathewson, Whitey Ford, Grover Cleveland Alexander, Juan Marichal and Lefty Grove – reached the Hall of Fame.

Hudson has now delivered nine straight seasons of double-digit victories. Only Greg Maddux (19) and Mike Mussina (15) entered 2007 with longer consecutive streaks of 10 or more wins. Maddux, by the way, shares the longest streak in history with Cy Young. Maddux (7-8 this year) and Mussina (6-7) are in danger of having their streaks stopped unless they put together winning streaks in a hurry. Either way, few major league pitchers

today have sustained success such as Hudson's.

Unlike Maddux and Mussina, Hudson has finished over .500 during each year of his double-digit wins streak. So, no other pitcher currently owns a longer run of consecutive winning 10-victory seasons.

Keeping the ball in the park has been a huge key for Hudson this season. After surrendering 25 home runs in 2006, he had only given up four in 151 2/3 innings this year. Greg Maddux (1994, 1995 and 1997) and Tom Glavine (1992) are the only Braves pitchers to work 200 innings and allow fewer than 10 home runs in the past 20 seasons.

Hudson has only once posted an ERA above the league average in his nine seasons (2006). His career ERA (3.49) falls one full run below the league ERA (4.49) during his career. Only nine other active starters with at least 1,000 innings pitched can make that claim.



Until an injured ankle landed him on the disabled list in early August, Edgar Renteria was on track for the best offensive season ever by a Braves shortstop. With 142 hits through Aug. 2, Renteria had a great chance to become the first Braves shortstop to reach the 200-hit plateau.

Renteria's numbers (through July 30) put him on track for 209 hits and 44 doubles. No Brave at any position has had 210 hits since Ralph Garr (214) in 1974.

With many of his hits coming at key moments, Renteria had lifted his average to .336. He should still have enough plate appearances for batting title qualification, which could enable him to achieve a rare feat. The last Braves shortstop to hit .320 (while qualifying for the batting title) was Alvin Dark in 1948 (.322).

Renteria also could post the highest slugging percentage for a Braves shortstop since 1900. He had a .487 mark, which led Jeff Blauser's 1997 figure (.482).

Renteria also owned an .879 on-base plus slugging percentage (OPS). Only three Braves shortstops have posted an OPS .850 or higher. Two of them – Sam Wise (.913 in 1887) and Herman Long (.881 in 1894) – did so before 1900. Blauser also topped this figure with an .886 OPS in 1997.

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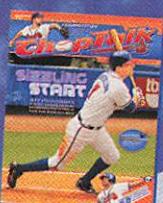
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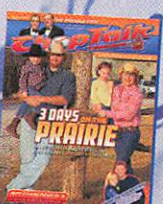
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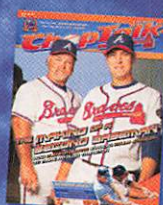
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STRONG PITCHING HAS DANVILLE ARMED FOR RUN AT REPEAT TITLE

WITH LESS THAN TWO WEEKS remaining in the Appalachian League's regular season, the defending champion Danville Braves appeared headed for a rematch of the 2006 championship series with the Elizabethton Twins. The D-Braves have had the league's best record throughout the season, thanks in large part to a pitching staff that has been dominant.

The D-Braves' pitchers entered mid-August with a staff ERA of 2.95, nearly one-third of a run better than second-ranked Elizabethton. Danville also paced the rookie-level league with 22 saves, and had allowed a league-low 20 home runs and 137 walks. The pitchers placed second with 370 hits allowed, five complete games and 484 strikeouts.

"These guys have done a phenomenal job," said Danville pitching coach Jim Czajkowski. "We've been throwing lefties out there as our starter most every day, and they really feed off each other."

Prior to his promotion to Rome on Aug. 3, Cole Rohrbough received much of the attention, thanks in part to his impressive strikeout totals. By pounding the strike zone with his low-90s fastball and "one of the best curveballs I've seen all year," according to D-Braves manager Paul Runge, Rohrbough reached double digits in strikeouts in three straight starts from July 13-25. He also allowed only two earned runs in his first seven outings, a span of 30 1/3 innings.

"Our staff at Danville was absolutely stacked," Rohrbough said. "There was a lot of competition there. We definitely drove one another, and that made everybody better."

Drafted in 2006 in the 22nd round by the Braves prior to returning to Nevada Community College, Rohrbough led his team to the NJCAA World Series this spring prior to signing with Atlanta as a draft-and-follow pick.

"I'm pleased with the way the season has been going, but I'm

definitely not satisfied," said Rohrbough, who allowed one earned run with nine strikeouts in his first nine innings in the South Atlantic League. "I didn't know what to expect in pro ball, but I've discovered that every batter I face was like a three or four hitter in college. The key is keeping my mistakes to a minimum and staying consistent."

Despite the loss of Rohrbough to Rome, the D-Braves have plenty of pitching to win the league crown for the second straight season. Jose Ortega has been just as effective as Rohrbough, going 5-0 with a league-low 1.27 ERA through Aug. 11. Ortega rendered only 37 hits in his first 49 2/3 innings while issuing only eight walks versus 44 strikeouts.

Edgar Osuna, a lefthander out of Mazatlan, Mexico, also has ranked among the league's top 10 in ERA throughout most of the season. Osuna was named the Appy League's Pitcher of the Week in early August after winning two outings and posting a 1.93 ERA and 14 strikeouts in 9 1/3 innings. Osuna allowed one earned run or less in eight of his first 10 appearances to go 4-2 with a save.

Steve Evarts did not allow a run in his first three outings (11 innings) with Danville after joining the team on July 19. He won three straight starts from

July 28-Aug. 7 and owned a 1.64 ERA after five appearances. Jeff Locke and Chad Rodgers have had one bad outing mixed among their strong performances and have become more effective as the season has progressed.

The relief corps has been similarly outstanding. Lefthander Tommy Palica, a 10th-round draft pick in June who throws a nasty split-finger fastball, gave up only five earned runs in his first 27 2/3 innings and owned a 4-1 record. Closer Nick Fellman led the Appy League by converting his first 13 save opportunities.



Edgar Osuna, a recent Appalachian League Pitcher of the Week, is a big part of the dominant pitching staff at Danville.



ORGANIZATIONAL

THE BRAVES and first-round draft pick **Jason Heyward** agreed on a contract Aug. 12, three days prior to the new deadline established by Major League Baseball. The left-handed slugging outfielder was drafted by Atlanta with the 14th overall selection in June after he batted .520 with eight home runs and 29 RBIs in 52 at-bats during his

senior season at Henry County High School, just south of Atlanta.



RICHMOND

TRIPLE A

THE BRAVES promoted **Brandon Jones** from Mississippi to Richmond on July 20 and have been thrilled with the way the outfielder has responded. Jones, who was leading the Southern League with 74 RBIs and was

hitting .292 with 15 home runs and 58 runs at the time of his promotion, batted just .186 in his first 12 games with the R-Braves.

In August, however, he responded by going 22-for-45 (.489) with 12 runs, six doubles, two homers and seven RBIs in his first 11 games of the month. He also put together a 12-game hitting streak from July 31-Aug. 11, including two or more hits in the last eight...

Pete Orr admits he had some rust when sent to Richmond on July 12 after spending

the past two seasons with Atlanta. Orr, who hit .179 in 56 at-bats with the big club this season, began to find his rhythm at the plate when he went 4-for-5 as Richmond's leadoff hitter in a 9-4 win over Ottawa on July 27. Orr has played six positions with the R-Braves, with the majority coming at third base, although he saw most of the activity in center field while **Gregor Blanco** was on the disabled list with a strained oblique muscle from July 23-Aug. 3...

Martin Prado, with Atlanta at this writing, is a strong challenger for the International League batting title and has made only two errors in his first 93 games this season. On Aug. 5, Prado homered versus Louisville, followed immediately by homers by **Brandon Jones** and **Brayan Pena**, marking the first time this season the R-Braves hit back-to-back-to-back home runs...

First baseman/outfielder **Barbaro Canizares** returned to Richmond on Aug. 1 and proceeded to stroke 21 hits in his first 38 at-bats. Canizares added 11 RBIs with five doubles, a triple and a home run during that stretch through Aug. 11. The Cuban went 5-for-5 with three doubles, three runs and three RBIs in a 9-2 victory over Indianapolis on Aug. 3. Visa problems sidelined Canizares from May 8 to July 23...

Utility infielder **Jonathan Schuerholz** retired following Richmond's game on Aug. 10 in Charlotte. The son of Atlanta GM **John Schuerholz**, the 27-year-old was an eighth-round draft pick in 2002 who batted .215 in 51 games this season with the R-Braves. **Mike Rozema**, who batted .250 in 66 games at Mississippi, filled Schuerholz's roster spot...

Blaine Boyer missed 12 days upon leaving his start on July 30 with tenderness in his elbow after recording only two outs versus Toledo. Boyer allowed four earned runs and three hits to suffer his second loss of the season. He returned to work four innings on Aug. 11, allowing only one unearned run and four hits while striking out five. He also did not walk a batter for the first time this season when pitching more than an inning. Boyer continues to battle command issues, walking 40 in his first 56 2/3 innings this season...

Jo-Jo Reyes is making the most of his opportunities since being demoted from Atlanta. On Aug. 8, Reyes limited Charlotte to one hit in six scoreless innings to improve to 3-0 with the R-Braves...

Iker Franco continues to dominate with his defense behind the plate. The native of Mexico had thrown out an impressive 46.2 percent of attempted basestealers, helping

the R-Braves go 29-12 during his first 41 starts behind the plate.



MISSISSIPPI

DOUBLE A

SLOW STARTS are becoming commonplace for **Kala Ka'aihue**. The Hawaiian first

TOP 10 PROSPECTS BY POSITION

C CLINT SAMMONS (age 24) Mississippi - University of Georgia product is stellar catch-and-throw man who could be backup to Brian McCann as soon as 2008.

1B KALA KA'AIHUE (22) Mississippi - Despite recent slow start after promotion to Double A, continues to show more power and run-producing ability than anyone else in farm system.

2B MARTIN PRADO (23) Richmond - Multi-talented player has only two errors and is challenging for International League batting crown.

3B VAN POPE (23) Mississippi - After awful first two months, found a few holes with his bat and committed only 11 errors.

SS BRENT LILLIBRIDGE (23) Richmond - In first full season in organization, has shown excellent glove and solid combination of speed, average and power at plate.

LF BRANDON JONES (23) Richmond - Breakthrough performance at Mississippi and seamless move to Richmond has him atop organization's prospects list.

CF JORDAN SCHAFER (21) Myrtle Beach - Continues to make highlight-reel catches and has learned to make consistent contact at plate.

RF CONCEPCION RODRIGUEZ (21) Rome - Only hitting .211 at Rome, but brass believes multi-talented player is on verge of breaking out.

RHP TOMMY HANSON (21) Myrtle Beach - Only had four wins through mid-August, but throws three pitches for strikes and is starting to move rapidly through organization.

LHP JO-JO REYES (22) Richmond - Roughed up during short stay in Atlanta, but resiliency was obvious upon return to Richmond.

RP JOEY DEVINE (23) Richmond - Continues to bounce between Atlanta and the minors, but return to previous mechanics has him throwing heat for strikes again.

baseman went 0-for-17 in his first four games with Mississippi, mirroring his rough starts following his June promotion to Myrtle Beach in 2006 and his return to the Carolina League this past April. Promoted to Mississippi on July 25, Ka'aihue played in 142 games with Myrtle Beach, divided between the 2006 and 2007 seasons, and hit .270 with 35 home runs and 92 RBIs, including 22 homers (tops in the Carolina League at the time of his promotion), a .292 batting average and 61 RBIs this year. Ka'aihue began to find his stroke when he went 5-for-13 with five RBIs from Aug. 6-9...

Ka'aihue's arrival sent **Mark Jurich** from first base to the outfield. Jurich was hitting .270 with 28 doubles (two behind the league leader), five homers and 53 RBIs through Aug. 12...

Clint Sammons continues to prove he is one of the premier catch-and-throw catchers in the minor leagues. Sammons has retired 35 of 71 attempted basestealers, an incredible success rate of 49.3 percent, tops in the Southern League. Sammons also has provided 29 RBIs in 68 games...

This has been a breakout season for **Diory Hernandez**, who opened the year back at Myrtle Beach before earning a pair of promotions to Mississippi. Hernandez continues to show an improved attitude in his everyday approach to the game, which has led to a more productive bat and a .306 average with seven home runs and 49 RBIs in his first 96 games with Mississippi. A shortstop prior to this season, Hernandez has displayed outstanding versatility with his defense at second base and third base...

Carl Loadenthal continues to prove that 2006 was not a fluke. One season after winning the Carolina League batting crown, Loadenthal has been a catalyst atop the M-Braves' lineup. He ranked second in the Southern League with 37 stolen bases and 125 hits through Aug. 12 while posting a .301 batting average...

Matt Esquivel was suspended for the third time in four seasons when the Braves announced the rightfielder violated unspecified team rules. At the time of his suspension on July 24, Esquivel led the team with 19 home runs while ranking among the league leaders with 70 RBIs...

Outfielder **Matt Young** made the most of his opportunity after being promoted to the M-Braves on July 20. The leftfielder had multi-hit games in three of his first four outings, going 7-for-16, and had 12 hits in 35 at-bats with Mississippi in July.



MYRTLE BEACH

ADVANCED A

THIRD BASEMAN **Eric Campbell** cannot catch a break. On Aug. 9, Campbell was placed on the disabled list after he re-injured his sore left shoulder during his second at-bat a day earlier. Campbell missed 31 games in April and May with a thumb-related ailment, yet departed the lineup leading the Pelicans with 14 home runs and 49 RBIs despite hitting a modest .223. Replacing Campbell on the roster was **Chase Fontaine**, who hit .288 with three homers and 26 RBIs in 95 games this season at Rome...

Shortstop **Michael Fisher** has been brilliant in the field and served as an offensive catalyst near the top of the Pelicans' lineup since his promotion from Danville on Aug. 1. Atlanta's sixth-round draft pick out of Georgia Tech in June, Fisher hit safely in his first nine games with Myrtle Beach, batting 13-for-35 (.371)...

Centerfielder **Jordan Schafer** has put together one of the most consistent seasons in the minors this year. Schafer had a 15-game hitting streak from July 22-Aug. 6, and concluded July with a .318 batting average. Schafer has ranked among the top 10 leaders in the minors in hits throughout the season, and had 147 through Aug. 11...

Lefty **Jonny Venters** was placed on the disabled list with elbow problems on July 24. An MRI revealed no structural damage to his surgically repaired elbow, with the Braves referring to the problem as an elbow strain. When Venters was sidelined, the Braves promoted **Jeff Lyman** from Rome on July 25.



ROME

CLASS A

THE BRAVES won 16 of 20 games from July 17-Aug. 6 and catcher **Phillip Britton** was a major contributor. Britton batted .412 (28-for-68) during the stretch with 16 RBIs. In July, the Braves went 19-10 (including 11-1 at State Mutual Stadium) to register the second-highest win total and third-best winning percentage (.642) over a full month in Rome history...

First baseman **Tyler Flowers** had a month to remember in July by hitting .352 with six home runs. Yet the most impressive numbers for the Marietta, Ga., native were his 30 RBIs, 23 runs scored and 14 doubles in 27 games. Flowers, who signed in 2006 as a

DOWN ON THE FARM



TOMMY HANSON

THROWING THE CHANGE IS MY KEY TO MOVING UP

I DON'T KNOW if any player is ever satisfied with his performance, but I admit that I'm really pleased with the way this season has gone so far. Having the chance to come up to Myrtle Beach after being promoted from Rome has been a great experience. I've had some success since I was called up, which has been very rewarding, and right now I'm just trying to get better.

One key for me so far has been the improvement with my breaking ball. It's been a lot more consistent this season than it was last year at Danville. I'm also doing a much better job of keeping my fastball down in the strike zone. My changeup has come along, too.

I never threw a changeup in college. To be able to throw that pitch for strikes and give the hitters something else to think about is probably the biggest reason I've been able to move up in the organization this year.

Another reason for the success I've had is centered on Doug (Henry) and D.C. (Bruce Dal Canton). Doug was the perfect coach for me to work with at Rome, and D.C. has been awesome here at Myrtle Beach.

Then to have (roving) coaches like Kent Willis and Mike Alvarez come around and provide their thoughts - it really gives a pitcher a complete perspective and several points of view. It's awesome to have those guys around to help you out and ask them questions.

In many ways, it seems like I've experienced a lot in a short period. I was a draft-and-follow pick in 2005 out of Riverside (Calif.) Community College, and I signed in 2006 just prior to the draft. I've always wanted to play professional baseball.

After the Braves drafted me, I wasn't sure how it was going to work out. I didn't know if I was going to sign, be drafted again, or go to school for at least another year. The way everything worked out, I couldn't be happier.

A lot of people talk about the differences between college baseball and pro ball, but one of the biggest changes for me was going from one end of the country to the other. Kris Medlen and I played against each other in college before playing together in Danville last year and then being together this season. We talk about how things are different in the South compared to California. The greatest difference is the accents, but there are a few other things that we laugh about.

The time zone change was also a big adjustment. I reported to Orlando after I signed, and we had to be up at 6 a.m. My body told me it was 3 a.m., and it took about a week to get used to that. Once the season started this year, it wasn't that hard, because we play at night. But even in spring training, it was hard to get my body on Eastern time.

As far as everything else is concerned, I really didn't know what to expect in pro ball when I signed. My first couple of times on the mound, I was a little hesitant for some reason. I think I was trying to gauge my abilities and see where I stood. After that, I decided the best route was to try to attack hitters by going right after them. I've used that philosophy ever since.

Making the jump from Danville to Rome was not that big. I believe it's more of a jump from Rome to high A here in Myrtle Beach. The (strike) zone is a little bit smaller and batters lay off more close pitches.

I know there are a lot of things I need to improve on, but with the setup the Braves have, I feel I have every chance to succeed as long as I keep getting after it.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Tommy Hanson, 21, is one of the organization's fastest-rising prospects. The 6-6, 210-pound righthander was a 22nd-round draft pick in 2005 (signed in 2006). At this writing, he led all Braves minor league pitchers with 133 strikeouts in 112 1/3 innings (combined Rome and Myrtle Beach).

WITH THE SETUP THE BRAVES HAVE, I FEEL I HAVE EVERY CHANCE TO SUCCEED AS LONG AS I KEEP GETTING AFTER IT.

FARM STATISTICS


RICHMOND
68-52

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BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Bigbie, Larry (OF)	.260	45	146	25	38	10	1	2	21	16	30	4
Blanco, Gregor (OF)	.282	103	380	66	107	16	4	2	29	54	66	18
Bohn, T.J. (OF)	.241	46	145	20	35	8	0	1	14	21	41	8
Canizares, Barbaro (1B)	.398	31	98	16	39	10	1	2	25	9	19	0
Clark, Doug (OF)	.273	113	385	60	105	21	2	11	57	47	77	18
Franco, Iker (C)	.197	50	152	11	30	8	0	1	18	15	27	0
Jones, Brandon (OF)	.344	24	93	18	32	9	1	3	13	10	17	3
Koonce, Graham (1B)	.224	58	183	22	41	9	1	10	42	25	53	0
Lillibridge, Brent (SS)	.306	67	245	38	75	11	2	8	31	17	45	23
McCarthy, Bill (OF)	.224	49	165	19	37	7	2	5	18	14	45	2
Mendez, Carlos (1B)	.269	70	227	26	61	13	0	6	33	8	34	0
Miller, Corky (C)	.210	64	181	12	38	8	0	4	25	25	26	4
Orr, Pete (OF/INF)	.243	30	111	20	27	4	4	1	5	9	27	4
Pena, Brayan (1B/C/OF)	.311	77	283	35	88	14	2	5	42	17	32	5
Prado, Martin (INF)	.320	93	353	58	113	20	3	4	38	33	39	5
Timmons, Wes (3B/1B)	.253	100	292	39	74	15	0	4	42	23	23	7

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Acosta, Manny	9-3	2.26	40	0	12	59.2	46	18	15	35	56	.218
Baerlocher, Ryan	2-4	4.25	10	9	0	53.0	60	25	25	14	32	.290
Barry, Kevin	5-6	3.97	21	20	0	102.0	106	52	45	38	75	.277
Basner, Ryan	4-4	3.90	22	4	1	64.2	63	30	28	20	59	.258
Bennett, Jeff	2-3	2.97	31	3	1	63.2	60	21	21	27	33	.259
Boyer, Blaine	2-2	4.92	18	10	2	56.2	63	34	31	40	53	.303
Devine, Joey	2-0	2.61	8	0	0	10.1	6	4	3	4	14	.154
Hernandez, Buddy	8-3	3.28	38	1	2	60.1	64	26	22	14	54	.274
Hodges, Trey	5-4	3.94	25	16	1	107.1	95	49	47	52	75	.242
Nelson, Brad	1-1	2.53	3	1	0	10.2	9	5	3	6	6	.237
Reyes, Jo-Jo	3-0	1.24	5	5	0	29.0	22	6	4	12	33	.210
Ring, Royce	1-0	3.86	6	0	1	7.0	4	3	3	4	8	.182
Scalamandre, Rich	0-4	5.60	22	0	1	35.1	40	26	22	15	18	.296
Schreiber, Zach	0-0	2.75	14	0	0	19.2	12	6	6	6	20	.167
Smith, Dan	3-3	5.49	9	8	0	39.1	41	24	24	27	22	.281
Winkelsas, Joe	1-0	3.97	5	0	0	11.1	10	6	5	5	7	.250


MISSISSIPPI
57-63

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BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Burrus, Josh (OF)	.218	79	216	28	47	9	0	6	32	28	66	7
Creek, Greg (1B)	.246	72	232	30	57	15	0	1	17	27	58	2
Esquivel, Matt (OF)	.247	98	372	66	92	16	2	19	70	46	97	15
Hernandez, Diory (SS/2B)	.306	96	360	43	110	18	1	7	49	22	55	17
Holt, J.C. (2B)	.315	76	308	37	97	13	3	0	15	30	61	14
Jones, Brandon (OF)	.293	94	365	58	107	21	6	15	74	44	84	12
Jurich, Mark (1B/OF)	.270	98	318	41	86	28	2	5	53	28	55	1
Kaaihue, Kala (1B)	.140	16	57	7	8	4	0	0	6	5	29	0
Lillibridge, Brent (SS)	.275	52	204	31	56	8	3	3	17	20	60	14
Loadenthal, Carl (OF)	.301	112	415	64	125	15	4	0	26	54	65	37
Lunar, Fernando (C)	.111	6	18	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	7	0
Pope, Van (3B)	.221	104	353	39	78	18	4	4	33	32	65	7
Rozema, Mike (INF)	.250	66	180	24	45	4	2	5	24	15	41	6
Sammons, Clint (C)	.244	68	246	18	60	8	0	4	29	19	55	1
Serrano, Ray (C)	.294	31	109	19	32	11	2	3	15	7	16	2
Young, Matt (OF)	.250	19	60	6	15	2	1	0	10	7	11	0

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Ascanio, Jose	2-2	2.54	40	1	7	74.1	62	25	21	18	68	.231
Bueno, Francisley	3-6	3.59	21	18	0	107.2	128	52	43	23	75	.295
Bullock, Tyler	1-0	7.36	9	0	0	18.1	24	21	15	9	8	.333
Devine, Joey	2-4	2.06	33	0	16	35.0	26	9	8	13	51	.211
Harrison, Matt	5-7	3.39	20	20	0	116.2	118	51	44	34	78	.264
Hernandez, Moises	2-1	5.45	7	7	0	39.2	44	30	24	18	19	.272
Morton, Charlie	4-5	4.95	37	3	0	63.2	71	37	35	34	54	.291
Nelson, Brad	4-1	4.57	24	4	0	61.0	65	33	31	15	38	.273
Nix, Michael	4-6	1.91	37	0	0	61.1	47	20	13	27	67	.217
Parr, James	3-5	4.81	14	13	0	76.2	85	42	41	20	61	.290
Reyes, Jo-Jo	8-1	3.56	13	13	0	73.1	63	31	29	35	71	.240
Schreiber, Zach	3-5	2.22	34	0	5	44.2	26	13	11	22	38	.173
Smith, Dan	4-2	1.94	9	9	0	51.0	37	14	11	20	41	.204
Villa, Kelvin	7-9	5.09	24	24	0	123.2	144	77	70	58	99	.294
Wilkerson, Wes	0-1	6.75	12	0	1	18.2	27	15	14	7	17	.342
Winkelsas, Joe	1-2	2.55	14	0	0	24.2	22	13	7	9	21	.232


MYRTLE BEACH
54-64

CAROLINA LEAGUE ADVANCED A | COASTAL FEDERAL FIELD (843) 918-6002

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Alvarez, Roberto (OF/1B)	.293	94	355	44	104	18	2	5	44	22	74	6
Arnold, Derrick (INF)	.218	84	266	30	58	10	1	2	19	12	48	10
Bennett, Paul (INF)	.225	59	173	20	39	9	1	1	13	35	58	9
Cabrera, Willie (OF)	.224	47	170	19	38	5	1	1	15	15	20	2
Camarena, Jose (C)	.223	78	265	28	59	12	0	5	34	29	72	4
Campbell, Eric (3B)	.223	78	292	44	65	12	0	14	49	29	47	6
Davis, Quentin (OF)	.273	113	418	47	114	8	8	4	56	25	61	33
Hernandez, Diory (2B/SS)	.313	17	64	9	20	8	2	0	9	2	11	2
Kaaihue, Kala (1B)	.298	89	309	57	92	20	1	22	61	53	92	2
Roberts, J.D. (OF/1B)	.192	72	224	16	43	8	0	2	19	18	65	2
Rozema, Mike (INF)	.294	20	68	10	20	1	1	2	15	9	13	1
Sammons, Clint (C)	.269	23	78	13	21	6	0	4	13	10	14	1
Schafer, Jordan (OF)	.285	85	347	60	99	28	7	9	36	35	78	16
Verastegui, Jerry (C)	.179	30	95	7	17	3	0	0	8	7	17	0
Williams, Larry (OF)	.319	14	47	4	15	2	0	1	10	0	9	0
Young, Matt (OF/2B)	.280	65	243	29	68	7	3	1	18	37	36	14

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Acosta, Jorge	1-2	6.27	19	0	0	33.0	33	27	23	29	33	.266
Bullock, Tyler	2-1	4.54	27	0	1	35.2	30	20	18	22	28	.231
Cuevas, Jairo	6-10	3.63	22	22	0	116.2	100	65	47	58	100	.225
Evans, Dustin	2-7	4.74	17	17	0	79.2	90	51	42	25	61	.288
Gunderson, Kevin	4-5	3.24	40	0	7	50.0	48	23	18	30	44	.257
Hanson, Thomas	2-2	4.35	7	7	0	39.1	35	19	19	14	43	.248
Heath, Deunte	2-2	4.04	7	7	0	42.1	42	24	19	14	36	.255
Hernandez, Moises	10-3	3.66	15	15	0	91.0	94	43	37	26	51	.265
Jung, Sung Ki	0-1	1.36	28	0	18	33.0	18	6	5	11	42	.159
Parr, James	3-4	3.18	8	8	0	39.2	36	14	14	6	37	.252
Payano, Nelson	3-4	3.48	36	1	0	54.1	39	25	21	48	72	.203
Sencion, Carlos	2-1	2.28	15	4	0	47.1	37	14	12	39	53	.215
Stanley, Adam	3-2	5.53	28	0	1	57.0	64	35	35	37	28	.288
Stevens, Jake	6-8	5.54	23	13	0	87.2	109	62	54	40	50	.312
Valenzuela, Sergio	0-0	6.88	18	2	0	35.1	47	33	27	18	19	.318
Venters, Jonathan	3-3	3.39	17	12	1	79.2	60	39	30	38	64	.210


ROME
54-65

SOUTH ATLANTIC LEAGUE CLASS A | STATE MUTUAL STADIUM (706) 368-9388

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Breazeale, Danny (3B)	.231	98	337	45	78	23	0	9	50	10	96	2
Britton, Phillip (C)	.289	75	291	46	84	20	3	6	39	8	38	3
Cabrera, Willie (OF)	.262	65	260	28	68	17	1	3	30	11	28	2
Flowers, Tyler (1B/C)	.296	86	321	52	95	30	2	9	58	34	63	3
Fontaine, Chase (INF)	.288	95	313	60	90	14	6	3	26	58	75	10
Hernandez, Victor (C)	.222	39	117	5	26	4	0	0	11	9	28	1
Hicks, Brandon (SS)	.314	21	70	15	22	7	0	2	8	11	11	2
Jones, Travis (INF)	.224	26	85	20	19	1	0	6	14	24	19	4
Lundahl, Chad (INF)	.215	85	298	30	64	11	0	3	32	17	60	0
Marciel, Robert (INF)	.240	59	179	23	43	7	0	1	16	11	42	4
Morris, Joshua (1B)	.165	34	121	11	20	8	0	1	10	12	36	0
Owings, Jon (OF)	.242	87	330	48	80	15	1	13	43	24	81	8
Rodriguez, Concepcion (OF)	.211	103	360	44	76	21	0	7	43	48	69	9
Schafer, Jordan (OF)	.372	30	129	16	48	15	2	5	20	16	31	4
Silva, Yohan (OF)	.260	83	269	50	70	8	3	9	38	50	55	8
Williams, Larry (1B/OF)	.270	89	337	25	91	16	2	2	33	25	57	2



DANVILLE

36-13

APPALACHIAN LEAGUE
ROOKIE ADVANCEDLEGION FIELD
(434) 797-3792

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Carmona, Eliazar (OF)	.300	33	50	13	15	2	0	0	4	4	10	2
Coe, Adam (3B)	.257	43	167	21	43	13	0	3	20	10	42	3
Dominguez, Javier (C/OF)	.205	28	78	15	16	3	1	1	6	4	20	1
Fisher, Michael (SS/3B)	.328	32	125	22	41	11	1	2	27	15	26	0
Hicks, Brandon (SS)	.224	18	58	14	13	3	1	3	13	12	18	1
Johnson, Benjamin (C)	.298	19	57	7	17	2	0	0	7	6	13	0
Johnson, Cody (OF)	.272	44	173	30	47	11	4	9	37	17	50	2
Jones, Travis (2B)	.271	13	48	9	13	2	0	2	7	6	9	1
Lee, Carlos (OF)	.266	44	139	27	37	8	1	3	17	10	34	2
Lundahl, Chad (SS/2B)	.351	17	57	8	20	5	0	0	7	7	7	0
Mejia, Ernesto (1B)	.339	28	109	16	37	8	2	5	24	6	24	6
Miles, Cole (2B)	.362	43	174	32	63	6	4	2	23	12	17	6
Morris, Joshua (1B)	.273	37	132	18	36	9	1	4	22	8	27	2
Parliament, Adam (OF)	.244	25	45	7	11	3	0	0	8	4	10	0
Shults, Stephen (OF)	.262	40	126	26	33	11	0	3	15	14	41	0
Stevens, Jeff (C)	.397	24	58	9	23	4	0	1	11	4	10	0

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Butts, Brett	2-0	0.73	5	0	0	12.1	8	4	1	3	12	.178
Castro, Yelir	1-1	6.55	5	1	0	11.0	14	8	8	5	6	.333
Everts, Steve	3-0	1.64	5	4	0	22.0	15	4	4	2	20	.197
Feliz, Neftali	2-0	2.05	7	6	0	26.1	16	8	6	12	28	.178
Fellman, Nicholas	1-0	2.86	17	0	13	22.0	13	8	7	7	36	.163
Gearrin, Cory	0-1	7.63	13	0	0	15.1	14	14	13	11	22	.237
Gonzalez, Raul	2-0	3.65	7	0	0	12.1	15	5	5	4	8	.300
Ladd, Tim	1-1	6.75	10	0	1	20.0	25	17	15	12	16	.305
Locke, Jeffrey	5-1	2.84	10	9	1	44.1	35	19	14	6	53	.213
Ortegano, Jose	5-0	1.27	11	7	0	49.2	37	11	7	8	44	.199
Osuna, Edgar	4-2	2.83	10	4	1	41.1	43	15	13	9	50	.267
Palica, Thomas	4-1	1.63	9	1	1	27.2	25	7	5	9	24	.240
Ramirez, William	0-1	3.96	9	1	2	25.0	32	16	11	8	27	.299
Rodgers, Chad	2-1	4.91	9	8	1	36.2	33	20	20	10	33	.236
Rohrbough, Cole	3-2	1.08	8	7	0	33.1	20	8	4	8	58	.167



GULF COAST

14-33

GULF COAST LEAGUE
ROOKIETHE BALLPARK AT DISNEY
(407) 939-2301

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Berres, David (OF)	.161	33	87	10	14	0	0	0	2	9	29	5
Dixon, Dennis (OF)	.188	24	64	7	12	1	1	0	6	14	18	5
Freeman, Frederick (1B)	.295	46	173	20	51	7	0	5	28	5	27	1
Fuller, Chais (INF)	.181	28	72	9	13	4	0	0	2	5	16	1
Gilmore, Jon (3B)	.285	42	158	11	45	5	1	1	29	4	27	0
Gress, Randy (2B/SS)	.103	25	58	6	6	1	0	1	6	4	15	1
Hamaoka, Takumi (OF)	.197	31	66	8	13	3	0	0	6	3	18	1
Henry, Rashod (OF)	.152	14	33	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	10	4
Kennelly, Mathew (C)	.190	32	84	7	16	1	0	1	6	5	15	0
Maddox, Chadwick (OF)	.157	25	70	3	11	2	0	0	3	5	17	1
Miles, Kuyaunnis (OF)	.153	33	85	3	13	2	1	0	3	3	45	7
Parra, Camilo (OF)	.211	32	71	9	15	1	0	2	5	2	25	0
Shimabukuro, Ryohei (1B)	.232	24	56	9	13	2	0	3	7	0	11	0
Sime, Samuel (SS/3B)	.307	44	166	30	51	13	0	5	23	6	23	5
Spiers, Joseph (2B)	.222	26	54	13	12	0	0	0	2	10	11	7
Sucre, Jesus (C)	.205	32	88	5	18	4	0	0	8	5	7	1

PITCHER	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Barrett, Eric	1-2	1.36	8	5	0	33.0	33	14	5	11	46	.262
Brewer, Caleb	0-1	5.70	9	3	0	23.2	25	20	15	20	18	.266
Castro, Yelir	0-1	3.32	6	4	0	19.0	19	10	7	8	12	.250
Davis, Kevin	1-0	1.06	10	0	0	17.0	14	3	2	12	16	.233
Figueroa, Steven	2-4	4.50	9	7	0	42.0	35	21	21	9	38	.230
Garcia, Ysidro	0-2	3.38	8	0	0	10.2	12	9	4	9	5	.250
Gonzalez, Raul	1-0	9.75	5	0	0	12.0	18	13	13	5	8	.353
Kent, Steve	1-2	4.31	10	7	0	39.2	34	25	19	10	33	.224
Lagua, Eligio	0-3	7.20	10	2	0	20.0	31	19	16	11	13	.360
Murillo, Eliezer	1-2	8.31	11	0	0	17.1	14	17	16	13	12	.226
Paulino, Angelo	2-2	4.50	9	5	0	30.0	27	18	15	16	30	.231
Railsback, Cody	1-2	1.69	6	0	0	10.2	9	5	2	3	11	.231
Rodriguez, Santos	0-1	5.66	9	1	2	20.2	19	16	13	16	27	.226
Rojas, Junior	3-3	4.26	7	6	0	31.2	33	15	15	10	28	.270
Shaffer, Jared	0-1	3.20	8	0	2	19.2	22	8	7	10	15	.289
Small, Matthew	0-1	3.86	6	0	1	9.1	7	8	4	4	12	.194

draft-and-follow pick from the previous year, continued his torrid streak in August with 14 hits in his first 41 at-bats with four doubles, a home run and six RBIs...

Two new additions - a pair of 2007 draft picks - reached Rome in late July and helped ignite the Braves while solidifying the middle infield. Shortstop **Brandon Hicks**, a third-round draft pick out of Texas A&M, had four hits in five at-bats in his first South Atlantic League game on July 20 and owned a .313 batting average through his first 20 outings.

Second baseman **Travis Jones**, a seventh-round pick out of South Carolina, arrived from Danville a week earlier than Hicks and batted .314 in his initial 17 games with the Braves. Jones became the first Rome player ever to hit three home runs in a game in the team's 5-4 comeback victory over Lexington on July 30. The former Gamecock star had solo shots in the first and eighth innings and a two-run homer in the fifth...

Tim Gustafson was placed on the disabled list Aug. 2 with tendinitis in his pitching arm.



DANVILLE

ROOKIE ADVANCED

RIGHTFIELDER **Dennis Dixon** left the D-Braves on July 26 to return to the University

of Oregon. Dixon is expected to be the Ducks' starting quarterback this fall. In his short stint with the D-Braves, Dixon went 0-for-9 with a walk after batting .188 in the Gulf Coast League. Despite his limited success at the plate, Dixon impressed the organization with his athleticism in the outfield as well as his solid size and strength...

First baseman **Ernesto Mejia** received a promotion to Rome after hitting .339 with six homers and 24 RBIs at Danville. Mejia, who hit a walk-off home run in the 10th inning in Danville's 4-2 win over Greenville on July 13, also played at Danville in 2006...

Middle infielder **Chad Lundahl** batted at a .358 clip in his first 16 games at Danville after being sent down on July 19 from Rome, where he hit only .215...

Catcher **Jeff Stevens** was promoted to Myrtle Beach on Aug. 7 after the product of nearby Dan River High School batted .397 (23-for-58) at Danville...

Danville won 15 consecutive games at home prior to losing to Bristol on Aug. 10. That marked the longest home winning streak in franchise history.



GULF COAST

ROOKIE

LEFTHANDER **Eric Barrett** was impressive during his eight appearances in the GCL prior to an early August promotion to Danville. Barrett, a 31st-round draft pick in 2006 out of Logan (Ill.) Junior College who signed with Atlanta this May, allowed earned runs in only two of his eight outings. He concluded his stint in Florida with 17 shutout innings over his last three starts, from July 20-Aug. 1. During that stretch, he allowed only 10 hits and one walk while striking out 22...

Steve Kent, a left-handed pitcher who signed with the Braves in mid-2005 out of Australia, has been another positive performer. Kent has shown good command of all three of his pitches and surrendered only 34 hits in his first 39 2/3 innings. Opposing batters were hitting just .224 off him through his first 10 outings...

The Braves have ranked at the bottom of the league in team batting average throughout the season. The situation would be even grimmer than the .226 average through Aug. 11 if not for first baseman **Freddie Freeman** and shortstop **Samuel Sime**. Freeman and Sime rank among the league leaders in hits, while Sime also is near the top in doubles and extra-base hits.

GAME BY GAME

GAME	DATE	OPP.	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRs	REC.	POS.	GB
1	4/2	PHI	A	W	5-3 (10)	Wickman (1-0)	McCann (1), Renteria 2 (2)	1-0	T-1	--
2	4/4	PHI	A	W	3-2 (11)	McBride (1-0)	McCann (2), Thorman (1)	2-0	2	-1/2
3	4/5	PHI	A	W	8-4	James (1-0)	Johnson (1)	3-0	T-1	--
4	4/6	NYM	H	L	1-11	Redman (0-1)	Francoeur (1)	3-1	2	-1
5	4/7	NYM	H	W	5-3	Smoltz (1-0)	Diaz (1)	4-1	T-1	--
6	4/8	NYM	H	W	3-2	Soriano (1-0)	Johnson (2)	5-1	1	--
7	4/10	WAS	H	W	8-0	Hudson (1-0)	A. Jones (1), Francoeur (2)	6-1	1	+1
8	4/11	WAS	H	W	8-3	James (2-0)	A. Jones (2), C. Jones (1)	7-1	1	+2
9	4/12	WAS	H	L	0-2	Smoltz (1-1)	--	7-2	1	+1
10	4/13	FLA	H	L	4-11	Redman (0-2)	C. Jones (2), Pena (1)	7-3	T-1	--
11	4/15	FLA	H	W	8-4	Hudson (2-0)	C. Jones (3), A. Jones (3)	8-3	1	+1
12	4/16	WAS	A	L	1-5	James (2-1)	--	8-4	1	+1/2
13	4/17	WAS	A	W	6-4	Smoltz (2-1)	C. Jones (4)	9-4	1	+1/2
14	4/18	CHI	H	W	8-6	Villarreal (1-0)	Francoeur (3), Thorman (2)	1	+1/2	
15	4/19	CHI	H	L	0-3	Redman (0-3)	--	10-5	2	-1/2
16	4/20	NYM	A	W	7-3	Hudson (3-0)	C. Jones (5)	11-5	1	+1/2
17	4/21	NYM	A	L	2-7	James (2-2)	--	11-6	2	-1/2
18	4/22	NYM	A	W	9-6	Yates (1-0)	Johnson 2 (4), Renteria (3)	12-6	1	+1/2
19	4/23	FLA	A	L	7-8	Davies (0-1)	Francoeur (4), C. Jones (5)	12-7	2	-1/2
20	4/24	FLA	A	W	11-6	Moylan (1-0)	--	13-7	2	-1/2
21	4/25	FLA	A	L	3-4	Wickman (1-1)	Johnson (5), C. Jones (7), Diaz (2)	13-8	2	-1/2
22	4/27	COL	A	W	9-7	James (3-2)	A. Jones (4), Wilson (1)	14-8	1	+1/2
23	4/28	COL	A	W	6-2	Smoltz (3-1)	Francoeur (5), Renteria (4)	15-8	1	+1/2
24	4/29	COL	A	L	7-9 (11)	Colyer (0-1)	Thorman (3)	15-9	2	-1/2
25	4/30	PHI	H	W	5-2	Gonzalez (1-0)	C. Jones (8), A. Jones (5)	16-9	1	+1/2
26	5/1	PHI	H	L	4-6	Redman (0-4)	C. Jones 2 (10)	16-10	1	+1/2
27	5/2	PHI	H	W	4-3	Paronto (1-0)	--	17-10	1	+1/2
28	5/4	LAD	H	W	4-0	Smoltz (4-1)	--	18-10	T-1	--
29	5/5	LAD	H	L	3-6	Hudson (3-1)	--	18-11	2	-1
30	5/6	LAD	H	W	6-4	Paronto (2-0)	--	19-11	T-1	--
31	5/7	SD	H	L	2-4	James (3-3)	--	19-12	T-1	--
32	5/8	SD	H	W	3-2	Gonzalez (2-0)	--	20-12	T-1	--
33	5/9	SD	H	W	3-2	Smoltz (5-1)	--	21-12	T-1	--
34	5/10	SD	H	W	5-3	Hudson (4-1)	--	22-12	1	+1/2
35	5/11	PIT	A	W	4-1	Davies (1-1)	A. Jones (5), Francoeur (6)	23-12	1	+1/2
36	5/12	PIT	A	W	9-2	James (4-3)	Thorman 2 (5)	24-12	1	+1/2
37	5/13	PIT	A	L	2-13	Lerew (0-1)	--	24-13	1	+1/2
38	5/14	WAS	A	L	1-2	Smoltz (5-2)	McCann (3)	24-14	2	-1/2
39	5/15	WAS	A	W	6-2	Hudson (5-1)	Renteria 2 (5)	25-14	1	+1/2
40	5/16	WAS	A	L	4-6	Davies (1-2)	--	25-15	2	-1/2
41	5/17	WAS	A	L	3-4	Paronto (2-1)	C. Jones (11)	25-16	2	-1 1/2
42	(1 of 2) 5/19	BOS	A	L	3-13	Lerew (0-2)	Francoeur (7)	25-17	2	-2 1/2
43	(2 of 2) 5/19	BOS	A	W	14-0	Smoltz (6-2)	C. Jones (12), Johnson (6), Diaz (3)	26-17	2	-2 1/2
44	5/20	BOS	A	L	3-6	Hudson (5-2)	--	26-18	2	-2 1/2
45	5/22	NYM	H	W	8-1	Davies (2-2)	Thorman (6), Davies (1)	27-18	2	-1 1/2
46	5/23	NYM	H	L	0-3	James (4-4)	--	27-19	2	-2 1/2
47	5/24	NYM	H	W	2-1	Smoltz (7-2)	Diaz (4)	28-19	2	-1 1/2
48	5/25	PHI	H	L	3-8	Hudson (5-3)	--	28-20	2	-2 1/2
49	5/26	PHI	H	L	4-6	Carlyle (0-1)	Renteria (7)	28-21	2	-3 1/2
50	5/27	PHI	H	L	6-13	Davies (2-3)	Saltalamacchia (1), A. Jones (7)	28-22	2	-4 1/2
51	5/28	MIL	A	W	2-1	James (5-4)	A. Jones (8)	29-22	2	-4
52	5/29	MIL	A	L	4-5	Moylan (1-1)	Harris (1)	29-23	2	-5
53	5/30	MIL	A	W	9-3	Hudson (6-3)	Johnson (7)	30-23	2	-4
54	6/1	CHI	A	W	8-5	Davies (3-3)	--	31-23	2	-3 1/2
55	6/2	CHI	A	W	5-3	Yates (2-0)	A. Jones (9)	32-23	2	-3 1/2
56	6/3	CHI	A	L	1-10	Cormier (0-1)	--	32-24	2	-3 1/2
57	6/4	FLA	H	L	4-6	Hudson (6-4)	Escobar (1), Renteria (8)	32-25	2	-4
58	(1 of 2) 6/5	FLA	H	W	3-1	Carlyle (1-1)	Saltalamacchia (2), Woodward (1)	33-25	2	-3 1/2
59	(2 of 2) 6/5	FLA	H	L	1-5	Smoltz (7-3)	--	33-26	2	-3 1/2
60	6/6	FLA	H	L	4-7	Davies (3-4)	--	33-27	2	-3 1/2
61	6/7	CHI	H	L	1-2	James (5-5)	A. Jones (10)	33-28	2	-3 1/2
62	6/8	CHI	H	L	1-9	Cormier (0-2)	--	33-29	2	-4 1/2
63	6/9	CHI	H	W	9-5	Moylan (2-1)	A. Jones (11), Renteria (9)	34-29	2	-3 1/2
64	6/10	CHI	H	W	5-4	Paronto (3-1)	Johnson (8)	35-29	2	-2 1/2
65	6/12	MIN	A	L	3-7	Davies (3-5)	Francoeur (8), Thorman (7)	35-30	2	-2
66	6/13	MIN	A	L	0-6	James (5-6)	--	35-31	2	-2

	DATE	OPP.	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRs	REC.	POS.	GB
GAME										
67	6/14	MIN	A	L	2-3	Wickman (1-2)	McCann (4)	35-32	3	-2 1/2
68	6/15	CLE	A	W	5-4	Soriano (2-0)	--	36-32	2	-2 1/2
69	6/16	CLE	A	W	6-2	Smoltz (8-3)	Renteria (10)	37-32	2	-1 1/2
70	6/17	CLE	A	L	2-5	Davies (3-6)	Thorman (8)	37-33	2	1 1/2
71	6/18	BOS	H	W	9-4	James (6-6)	McCann (5), Thorman (9)	38-33	2	-1 1/2
72	6/19	BOS	H	L	0-4	Hudson (6-5)	--	38-34	2	-1 1/2
73	6/20	BOS	H	L	0-11	Carlyle (1-2)	--	38-35	2	-1 1/2
74	6/22	DET	H	L	0-5	Smoltz (8-4)	--	38-36	3	-2 1/2
75	6/23	DET	H	L	1-2	Davies (3-7)	C. Jones (13)	38-37	3	-3 1/2
76	6/24	DET	H	L	0-5	James (6-7)	--	38-38	3	-4 1/2
77	6/25	WAS	H	W	4-1	Hudson (7-5)	McCann (6)	39-38	3	-4 1/2
78	6/26	WAS	H	W	6-2	Carlyle (2-2)	Saltalamacchia 2 (4), A. Jones (12)	40-38	3	-3 1/2
79	6/27	WAS	H	W	13-0	Smoltz (9-4)	McCann (7)	41-38	3	-3 1/2
80	6/29	FLA	A	W	12-3	James (7-7)	--	42-38	2	-4
81	6/30	FLA	A	W	6-5	Hudson (8-5)	--	43-38	2	-4
82	7/1	FLA	A	L	5-6 (10)	Soriano (2-1)	A. Jones (13)	43-39	2	4
83	7/2	LAD	A	L	2-8	Smoltz (9-5)	--	43-40	2	-4
84	7/3	LAD	A	L	6-7	Ledezma (3-2)	McCann (8)	43-41	2	-4
85	7/4	LAD	A	W	5-2	James (8-7)	A. Jones (14)	44-41	2	-3
86	7/5	LAD	A	W	8-6	Moylan (3-1)	Francoeur (9), C. Jones 2 (15)	45-41	2	-3
87	7/6	SD	A	W	7-4	Carlyle (3-2)	A. Jones (15)	46-41	2	-2
88	7/7	SD	A	L	5-8	Yates (2-1)	Francoeur (10)	46-42	2	-3
89	7/8	SD	A	W	5-4	Davies (4-7)	McCann (9), Johnson (9)	47-42	2	-2
90	7/13	PIT	H	W	9-1	Hudson (9-5)	McCann 2 (11), A. Jones (16)	48-42	2	-1 1/2
91	7/14	PIT	H	W	5-4	Wickman (2-2)	A. Jones (17)	49-42	2	-1 1/2
92	7/15	PIT	H	W	5-1	Carlyle (4-2)	--	50-42	2	-1 1/2
93	7/16	CIN	H	L	3-10	Davies (4-8)	--	50-43	2	-1 1/2
94	7/17	CIN	H	L	5-6	Reyes (0-1)	A. Jones (18)	50-44	2	-2 1/2
95	7/18	CIN	H	L	4-5 (15)	Ascanio (0-1)	--	50-45	2	-2 1/2
96	7/19	STL	H	W	10-1	Hudson (10-5)	A. Jones (19), Diaz (5)	51-45	2	-2 1/2
97	7/20	STL	H	L	2-4	Soriano (2-2)	--	51-46	2	-3 1/2
98	7/21	STL	H	W	14-6	Carlyle (5-2)	C. Jones (16)	52-46	2	-2 1/2
99	7/22	STL	H	L	2-7 (10)	Yates (2-2)	Johnson (10)	52-47	2	-3 1/2
100	7/23	SF	A	W	4-2	Smoltz (10-5)	--	53-47	2	-3
101	7/24	SF	A	W	7-5 (13)	Moylan (4-1)	C. Jones (17)	54-47	2	-3
102	7/25	SF	A	L	1-2	James (8-8)	--	54-48	2	-4
103	7/26	SF	A	L	2-4	Carlyle (5-3)	Francoeur (11)	54-49	2	-4
104	7/27	ARI	A	L	7-8 (11)	Ledezma (3-3)	--	54-50	3	-4
105	7/28	ARI	A	L	3-4 (10)	Yates (2-3)	--	54-51	3	-4 1/2
106	7/29	ARI	A	W	14-0	Hudson (11-5)	A. Jones (20), Thorman (10)	55-51	3	-4 1/2
107	7/31	HOU	H	W	12-4	James (9-8)	McCann (12), Johnson 2 (12), Francoeur (12)	56-51	3	-3 1/2
108	8/1	HOU	H	W	12-3	Carlyle (6-3)	Renteria (11), Teixeira (1)	57-51	2	-3 1/2
109	8/2	HOU	H	L	11-12 (14)	Villarreal (1-1)	A. Jones (21), Teixeira (2), Diaz (6)	57-52	3	-4 1/2
110	8/3	COL	H	L	2-9	Smoltz (10-6)	Teixeira (3)	57-53	3	5 1/2
111	8/4	COL	H	W	6-4	Hudson (12-5)	Diaz (7)	58-53	2	-4 1/2
112	8/5	COL	H	W	6-5 (10)	Villarreal (2-1)	C. Jones (18)	59-53	2	-4 1/2
113	8/7	NYM	A	W	7-3	Carlyle (7-3)	Diaz (8), Francoeur (13)	60-53	2	-3 1/2
114	8/8	NYM	A	L	3-4	Soriano (2-3)	--	60-54	3	-4 1/2
115	8/9	NYM	A	W	7-6	Hudson (13-5)	C. Jones (19), Teixeira (4)	61-54	2	-3 1/2
116	8/10	PHI	A	L	4-5	Moylan (4-2)	Diaz (9)	61-55	3	-3 1/2
117	8/11	PHI	A	W	7-5	Mahay (1-0)	Johnson (13), Francoeur (14)	62-55	2	-2 1/2
118	8/12	PHI	A	L	3-5	Carlyle (7-4)	--	62-56	3	-3 1/2

INDIVIDUAL STATS

Through August 13

BATTERS	AVG	SLG	OBP	G	AB	R	H	TB	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB	CS	E
Diaz	.341	.504	.371	98	252	30	86	127	14	0	9	32	11	40	3	0	2
Jones, C.	.337	.596	.428	94	359	73	121	214	28	4	19	66	60	56	5	1	7
RIGHT	.304	.527	.368		148		45	78	8	2	7	25	15	22			
LEFT	.360	.645	.465		211		76	136	20	2	12	41	45	34			
Renteria	.336	.487	.392	105	423	74	142	206	29	1	11	53	38	65	11	1	10
Miller	.333	.500	.333	3	6	2	2	3	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Harris	.328	.449	.403	83	247	44	81	111	17	5	1	24	28	49	16	10	3
Escobar	.315	.392	.356	55	181	27	57	71	11	0	1	17	10	24	4	2	9
Francoeur	.309	.466	.351	118	470	61	145	219	32	0	14	76	30	87	2	2	3
Johnson	.298	.497	.395	110	392	70	117	195	19	10	13	60	61	85	9	4	11
McCann	.269	.447	.321	99	360	38	97	161	28	0	12	67	26	54	0	0	9
Prado	.257	.314	.297	13	35	3	9	11	2	0	0	1	2	3	0	0	2
Teixeira	.255	.596	.333	11	47	8	12	28	2	1	4	12	4	14	0	0	1
RIGHT	.167	.167	.286		18		3	3	0	0	0	2	3	6			
LEFT	.310	.862	.364		29		9	25	2	1	4	10	1	8			
Thorman	.219	.400	.260	93	260	33	57	104	17	0	10	34	12	62	1	1	6
Jones, A.	.214	.414	.309	115	430	62	92	178	21	1	21	74	56	112	5	1	2
Woodward	.212	.301	.250	72	113	12	24	34	5	1	1	8	6	25	1	0	5
ATLANTA	.278	.437	.342	118	4,149	586	1,154	1,813	244	23	123	566	384	837	57	23	84
OPPONENTS	.262	.410	.329	118	4,070	543	1,068	1,667	197	30	114	509	391	785	74	26	64

Totals include pitchers' hitting

PINCH HITTERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) Miller (.000-1-0-0), Prado (.400-2-0-0), Escobar (.400-2-0-0), Diaz (.333-12-0-3), Harris (.300-3-0-0), Thorman (.261-6-1-4), Johnson (.125-1-0-0), Woodward (.118-4-1-4), Jones, C. (.000-0-0-0), McCann (.000-0-0-0), Renteria (.000-0-0-0), TEAM (.210-38-2-15).

PITCHERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) Villarreal (.250-1-0-0), Hudson (.214-12-0-6), James (.143-6-0-2), Carlyle (.143-4-0-2), Smoltz (.111, 4-0-0-2), Moylan (.000-0-0-0), Cormier (.000-0-0-0), Lerew (.000-0-0-0), Yates (.000-0-0-0), STAFF (.153-27-0-12).

KEY: AVG-Batting average, SLG-Slugging percentage, OBP-One base percentage, G-Games, AB-At-bats, R-Runs, H-Hits, 2B-Doubles, 3B-Triples, HR-Home runs, RBI-Runs batted in, BB-Walks, SO-Strikeouts, HP-Hit by pitch, SB-Stolen bases, CS-Caught stealing, E-Errors, W-L-Wins-Losses, ERA-Earned run average, OBA-Opponents' batting average, GS-Games started, CG-Complete games, GF-Games finished, SV-Saves, IP-Innings pitched, ER-Earned runs.

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	OBA	G	GS	CG	GF	SV	IP	H	R	ER	HR	BB	SO
Mahay	1-0	1.23	.160	6	0	0	0	0	7.1	4	2	1	0	5	6
Gonzalez	2-0	1.59	.246	18	0	0	5	2	17	15	3	3	0	8	13
Moylan	4-2	1.95	.201	53	0	0	11	1	64.2	45	22	14	4	23	44
Hudson	13-5	3.01	.248	25	25	0	0	0	164.2	152	56	55	4	38	101
Smoltz	10-6	3.03	.264	22	22	0	0	0	139.2	144	53	47	11	31	126
Villarreal	2-1	3.55	.230	43	0	0	9	1	66	56	29	26	5	23	57
Wickman	2-2	3.79	.258	45	0	0	35	19	40.1	42	19	17	3	16	33
James	9-8	3.93	.266	24	24	0	0	0	132.2	135	59	58	21	54	95
Soriano	2-3	3.93	.202	54	0	0	15	5	52.2	39	25	23	11	12	46
Carlyle	7-4	4.39	.272	15	14	0	1	0	80	81	41	39	11	20	51
Yates	2-3	5.15	.238	57	0	0	10	2	50.2	46	35	29	4	25	52
Lerew	0-2	7.71	.298	3	3	0	0	0	11.2	14	10	10	4	7	9
Dotel	0-0	8.31	.222	5	0	0	1	0	4.1	4	5	4	1	1	5
Cormier	0-2	13.50	.407	4	3	0	1	0	12.2	24	19	19	8	10	6
ATLANTA	62-56	4.16	.262	118	118	0	118	31	1,061.1	1,068	543	490	114	391	785
OPPONENTS	56-62	4.63	.278	118	118	1	117	28	1,058.1	1,154	586	545	123	384	837

TENTATIVE; SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

FOR SEASON, GROUP AND SUITE TICKET INFORMATION, CALL (404) 577-9100 OR VISIT braves.com

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

TURNER FIELD

AWAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
26 2:15 PM STL TBS	27 7:05 PM FLA SS	28 7:05 PM FLA SS	29 7:05 PM FLA FSN SOUTH	30	31 7:35 PM NYM SS	1 3:55 PM NYM FOX
2 1:05 PM NYM TBS	3 1:05 PM PHI TBS	4 7:35 PM PHI SS	5 1:05 PM PHI TBS	6	7 7:35 PM WSH FSN SOUTH	8 7:05 PM WSH TBS
9 1:05 PM WSH TBS	10 7:10 PM NYM SS	11 7:10 PM NYM SS	12 7:10 PM NYM FSN SOUTH	13	14 7:05 PM WSH SS	15 7:05 PM WSH TBS
16 1:35 PM WSH TBS	17 7:05 PM FLA SS	18 7:35 PM FLA SS	19 7:35 PM FLA FSN SOUTH	20 7:35 PM MIL SS	21 7:35 PM MIL ESPN	22 7:05 PM MIL SS
23 1:05 PM MIL TBS	24	25 7:05 PM PHI SS	26 7:05 PM PHI FSN SOUTH	27 7:05 PM PHI SS	28 8:05 PM HOU SS	29 7:05 PM HOU SS
30 2:05 PM HOU TBS						

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3 07 DIVISION SERIES	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11 07 LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24 07 WORLD SERIES GAME 1	25 07 WORLD SERIES GAME 2	26	27 07 WORLD SERIES GAME 3
28 07 WORLD SERIES GAME 4	29 07 WORLD SERIES GAME 5	30	31 07 WORLD SERIES GAME 6	1 07 WORLD SERIES GAME 7		

DIVISION SERIES
TBS & TBS

LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP
TBS

WORLD SERIES
ALL HOME GAMES FOX

WORLD SERIES
N.L. HOME GAMES FOX

* If Needed

All games on The Bull (94.9) and WGST-AM (640)

ESPN Cable Sports Network
FOX Fox Broadcasting System

FSN Fox Sports Net South
TBS Turner Broadcasting System
SS SportSouth



ROSTER

As of August 12

PITCHERS 15*

46 Manny Acosta
38 Buddy Carlyle
40 Lance Cormier
26 Octavio Dotel*
51 Mike Gonzalez*
15 Tim Hudson
36 Chuck James
49 Ron Mahay

* DISABLED
+ 12 PITCHERS ACTIVE
7 INFELDERS ACTIVE

50 Anthony Lerew*
58 Peter Moylan
29 John Smoltz
39 Rafael Soriano
56 Oscar Villarreal
28 Bob Wickman
33 Tyler Yates

CATCHERS 2

16 Brian McCann
27 Corky Miller

INFELDERS 8#

19 Yunel Escobar
2 Kelly Johnson
10 Chipper Jones
1 Martin Prado

11 Edgar Renteria*
24 Mark Teixeira
20 Scott Thorman
5 Chris Woodward

OUTFIELDERS 4

23 Matt Diaz
7 Jeff Francoeur
22 Willie Harris
25 Andruw Jones

MLB

TO PURCHASE SEASON TICKETS
OR FOR MORE INFORMATION,
CALL (404) 577-9100 OR VISIT braves.com

ASK ABOUT PRICES ON PRO-RATED PLANS



4-GAME PACK

Terrace Level.....\$132
Outfield Pavilion.....\$76
Upper Box.....\$44

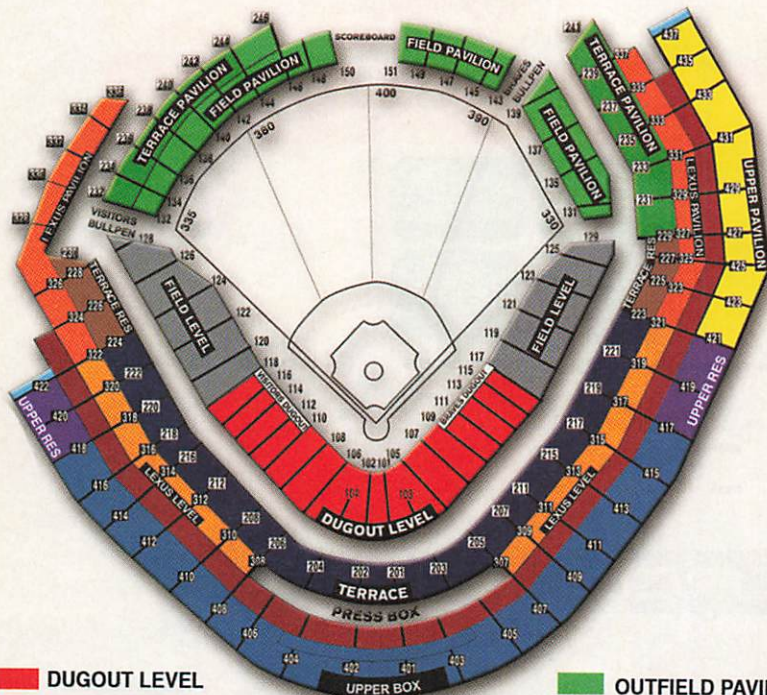
Labor Day Pkg: Aug. 31 (Mets),
Sept. 1 (Mets),
Sept. 2 (Mets),
Sept. 3 (Philadelphia).



GIVE A GIFT CARD

Braves Gift Cards are available in \$25 and \$50 denominations and can be used to purchase Tickets, Concessions and Merchandise.

To purchase gift cards or to obtain more information, visit Braves.com or the Braves Clubhouse Store at CNN Center (call 404-523-5854).



DUGOUT LEVEL
TERRACE LEVEL
FIELD LEVEL
LEXUS

OUTFIELD PAVILLION
UPPER BOX
TERRACE RESERVED
LEXUS PAVILLION
UPPER PAVILLION

FLEX PLANS

* Minimum 9 Games For As Low As \$99

Location	Regular Price*	Flex Price*	Premium Price*	Flex Price*
Lexus Level	\$36	\$35	\$40	\$35
Terrace Level	\$34	\$33	\$38	\$33
Lexus Pavilion	\$28	\$27	\$32	\$27
Outfield Pavilion	\$20	\$19	\$24	\$19
Upper Box	\$12	\$11	\$16	\$11

* Per Game

SPECIAL PACKAGES

GRAND SLAM PACK

"MasterCard Grand Slam packs" include 4 tickets, 4 hot dogs, 4 Cokes, a Braves yearbook and a parking pass! Available every Sunday through Thursday.

Location	Regular Games
Upper Box.....	\$59
Outfield Pavilion.....	\$79
Lexus Pavilion.....	\$99

TWO-FOR-ONE TUESDAYS

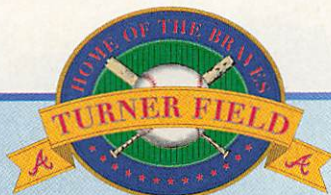
Fans can purchase two-for-one Upper Level Reserved seats on "Coca-Cola Two-For-One Tuesdays."

OUTFIELD ADVANTAGE

Fans can purchase two-for-one Outfield Pavilion seats on "McDonald's Outfield Advantage" Wednesdays.

COLLEGE/MILITARY 2 FOR 1

Show college or military ID for 2 for 1 Upper Box seats.



TICKET INFO

INDIVIDUAL PRICES

Location	Gate Price	Premium Price*	Season Price
Dugout	\$56	\$60	\$48
Suite	\$56	\$60	\$48
Lexus	\$36	\$40	\$32
Field	\$34	\$38	\$28
Terrace	\$34	\$38	\$28
Lexus Pavilion	\$28	\$32	\$26
Terrace Reserved	\$24	\$28	\$22
Field/Terrace Pavilion	\$20	\$24	\$10
Upper Box	\$12	\$16	\$10
Upper Reserved	\$8	\$12	N/A
Upper Pavilion	\$6	\$6	\$3
Skyline	\$1	\$1	N/A

*All Friday and Saturday regular season games

MUSEUM & TOUR INFO

The Ivan Allen Jr. Braves Museum features more than 500 Braves artifacts that trace the team's history from its beginnings in Boston (1871-1952) to Milwaukee (1953-65) to Atlanta (1966-present). It is located on the northwest side of Turner Field at aisle 134. The museum opens two and a half hours before each game and closes in the middle of the seventh inning. The museum is open year-round and is the starting point of one-hour guided tours of Turner Field. Tours leave on the hour.

Tour reservations are not necessary for individuals or groups of less than 20 people. Tickets can be purchased the day of the tour at the main ticket window. Free parking in the Green lot.

Admission to the museum during games is one token (\$2) and \$5 on non-game days. Tour tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for children and \$7 for groups of 20 or more. Walk-up tickets can be purchased at the ticket window. Groups of 20 or more and school groups must make reservations two weeks in advance by calling (404) 614-2311.



HOURS OF OPERATION

APRIL - OCTOBER

Monday - Saturday 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Sunday 1 - 3 p.m.

OCTOBER - MARCH

Monday - Saturday 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

DEC. 23-JAN. 3 CLOSED

TOUR TICKETS

ADULTS \$10
CHILDREN 13 and Under \$5

*Subject to change

Tours not available when the Braves have afternoon home games

NEW FOR 2007 ALL YOU CAN EAT SEATS!

ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT-SEATS BASIC PACKAGE - \$25

Includes ticket in Upper Reserved along first base side and access to All-Star Express stand at aisle 427.

Menu includes ballpark favorites:

Hot Dogs
Nachos
Peanuts
Popcorn

Coca-Cola, Diet Coke, Sprite & bottled water

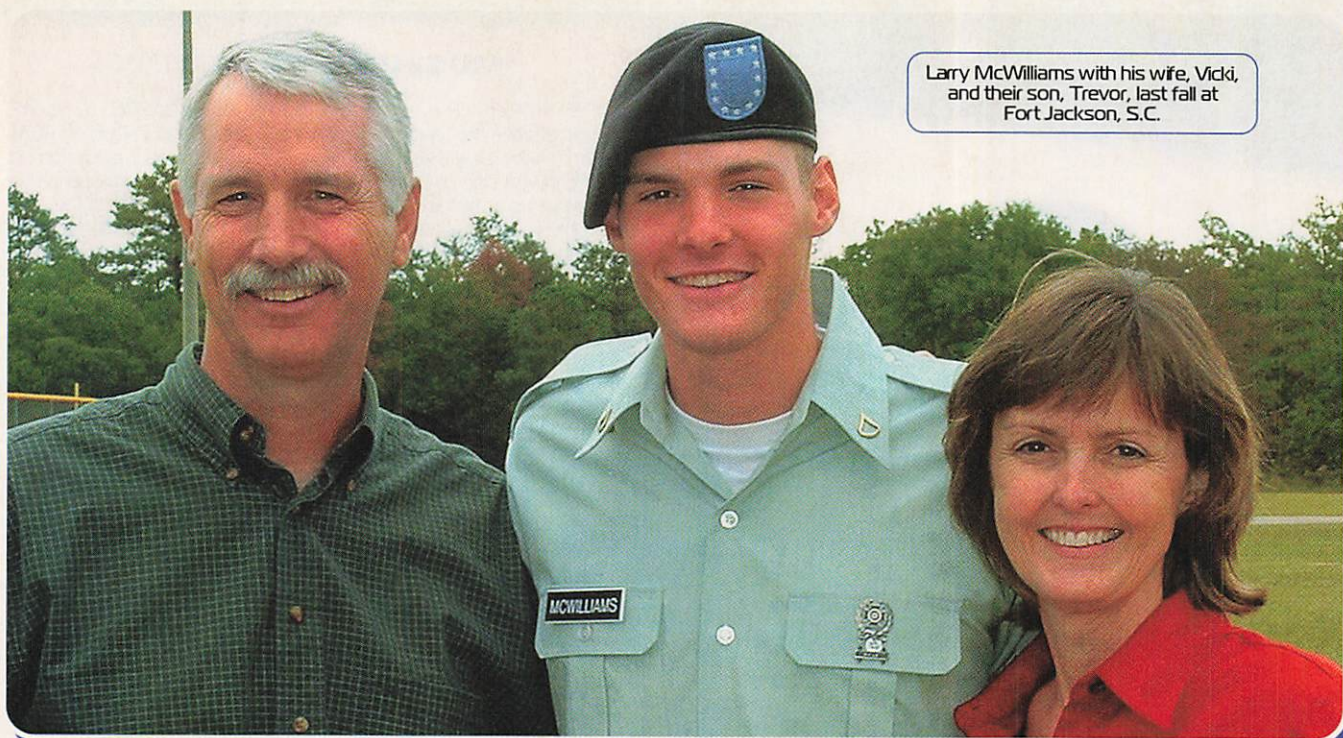
ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT-SEATS LEXUS PACKAGE - \$60

Includes ticket in Lexus Pavilion in right field.
Menu is the Skip and Pete's Barbeque package

which includes:
BBQ Pulled Pork
BBQ Chicken Wings
Hot Dog
Cole Slaw
Baked Potato Salad
Corn Bread
Peanuts & Popcorn
Coca-Cola, Diet Coke, Sprite
& Budweiser and Bud Light

Tickets can be purchased in advance at braves.com/tickets, 1-800-326-4000, any Ticketmaster outlet or Turner Field ticket office. Groups of 25 or more can purchase tickets at 404-577-9100 and receive recognition on Tomahawk LED board during the game.

Larry McWilliams with his wife, Vicki, and their son, Trevor, last fall at Fort Jackson, S.C.



STREAK BREAKER

Larry McWilliams' Behind-the-Back Stab Helped Stop Rose's Binge at 44 Games

BY BRIAN KNAPP

The morning of Aug. 1, 1978, dawned like any other for Larry McWilliams, but by day's end, the 24-year-old Atlanta Braves rookie would carve his name into the history books.

The Cincinnati Reds were in town and with them came Pete Rose and his National League record 44-game hitting streak.

Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium buzzed with the chatter of more than 31,000 fans, when McWilliams toed the rubber for his fourth big league start. As the leadoff man in a lineup anchored by slugger George Foster and Future Hall-of-Famer Johnny Bench, Rose greeted McWilliams to start the game.

The Cincinnati legend worked the count full and then lined a fastball foul down the right field line.

"He made me think I'd better throw something off speed," McWilliams said. "I threw a hard curve and ended up walking him. I felt bad - you like to see a guy get the chance." Early nerves chipped away at McWilliams, who surrendered a two-run homer to Bench and dug a 3-0 hole in the top of the first inning.

"I felt like it was my streak out there on the mound," McWilliams said. "Then I thought, 'This ain't my streak. What am I nervous about?'"

The left-handed McWilliams challenged Rose twice more.

In the second inning, Rose lined a shot back up the middle that was all but past McWilliams and into center field for a hit... however, the pitcher somehow caught the ball behind his back - after it was past him. McWilliams glove simply happened to be in the right place at the right time, robbing Rose of what would have

been a hit on nearly any other occasion.

In the fifth inning, McWilliams induced Rose to ground out to short. Staked to an 8-4 lead, McWilliams turned the game and the fate of Rose's historic streak over to the bullpen in the sixth inning.

"As a player, I wanted him to get it," McWilliams said. "But I didn't want him to get it off me."

Braves closer Gene Garber retired Rose on a line drive doubleplay in the seventh. Finally, with two outs in the ninth, Garber struck out Major League Baseball's future hit king swinging to end the game. Rose's streak was stopped at 44 games, a modern NL record (post 1900) that equaled "Wee" Willie Keeler's streak in 1897.

As the bowels of Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium teemed with local and national media, McWilliams walked quietly into the post-game press conference, seated himself at the end of a long table, and waited for Rose to arrive.

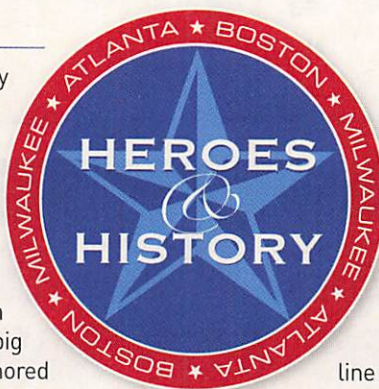
"He had such a following," McWilliams said. "The room was packed."

Minutes later, Rose entered and found his path to the microphone blocked.

"He came up to the end of the table and couldn't get around me," McWilliams said. "He fielded a question, looked at me and asked, 'You going to scoot down and let me sit?'"

Seated next to the man who helped end the longest hitting streak in the NL in 81 years, Rose met the spotlight with wit and charm.

"He sat down right beside me," McWilliams said. "He's a sharp



guy. He popped off a few one-liners. Then, somebody in the back of the room asked, 'Would you know Larry McWilliams if he was sitting right next to you?'"

Perplexed and embarrassed, Rose tilted his head and gazed at the young Texan beside him. The only player to come within 15 games of Joe DiMaggio's mythical major league record 56-game hitting streak, Rose had no clue he had been rubbing shoulders with McWilliams the entire time.

"He was very generous with his compliments," McWilliams said.

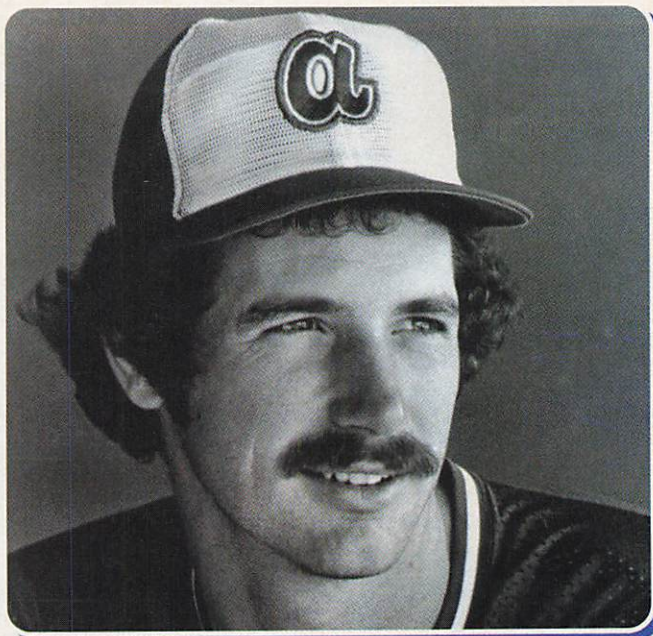
That sultry August night in Atlanta 29 years ago remains the defining moment in McWilliams' career that spanned 13 seasons. Chosen by the Braves with the sixth overall pick out of Paris Junior College (Paris, Texas) in the 1974 draft, McWilliams signed for \$10,500, climbed the minor league ladder, and eventually spent parts of six seasons with Atlanta (1978-82). He logged his best season as a Brave in the rookie year of 1978 by posting a 9-3 record in 15 starts. After a move to the bullpen in 1982, his relationship with team management soured.

"It's kind of funny," McWilliams said. "I'd been working out of the bullpen and had talked to [manager] Joe Torre three times about starting. I guess he got tired of hearing me complain. He came up to me one day and said, 'You can start, but it won't be with us.'"

On June 30, 1982, the Braves traded McWilliams to Pittsburgh in the deal that brought the colorful Pascual Perez to Atlanta. McWilliams admits the news was difficult to swallow.

"You feel a little rejected at first," he said. "My wife told me, 'They don't want you, but someone else does. It's better to go there than to stay here.'"

The change in uniform gave McWilliams renewed life as a



NATIONAL BASEBALL HALL OF FAME

starting pitcher, but also cost him a chance to pitch in post-season, because the Braves went on to win the NL West that year.

"I was happy for them," McWilliams said.

Alongside Bill Madlock, Dave Parker and Willie Stargell, McWilliams put together his two best seasons in Pittsburgh. In 1983, he emerged as one of the league's most productive and reliable pitchers. He started 35 games, posted a 15-8 record and recorded a career-high 199 strikeouts. He finished fifth in Cy Young Award voting.

However, he had peaked at age 29 and never again won more than 12 games in a season. After bouncing around several organizations – including a return trip to Atlanta in 1987 – McWilliams reached the end of his career rope in 1990. Disenchanted with his role in the Kansas City bullpen, he voiced his displeasure and talked himself out of a job.

"I opened my big mouth, demanded something and wasn't very polite about it," he said. "I was in relief and didn't like it. I made some demands that were pretty ridiculous, and they released me."

At 36, he had thrown his final pitch.

Life after baseball has been kind to McWilliams. He credits his wife of 30 years, Vicki, with much of his success, both personally and professionally.

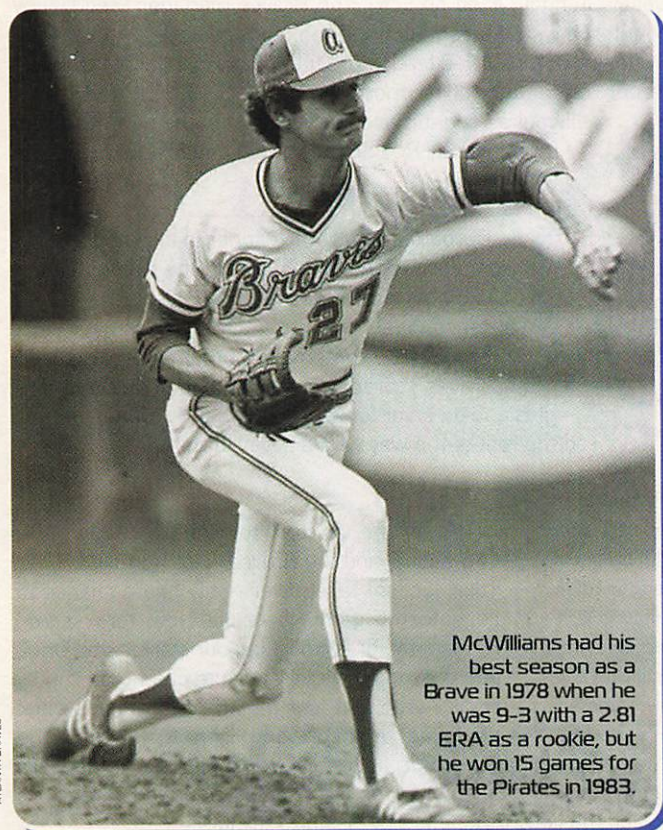
"She's the trooper in the family," McWilliams said.

A father of six – two of whom were adopted through the family's participation in foster care programs – and grandfather to four, McWilliams purchased a 255-acre ranch in Colleyville, Texas, six years ago. In addition, the 53-year-old is pursuing his degree in Bible Ministry at Southern Christian University. Though he has stood behind the pulpit before, he does not intend to pursue full-time work as a pastor.

"I've done it a few times," McWilliams said. "I'd like to be an elder or a deacon. I like more of the one-on-one teaching in the church."

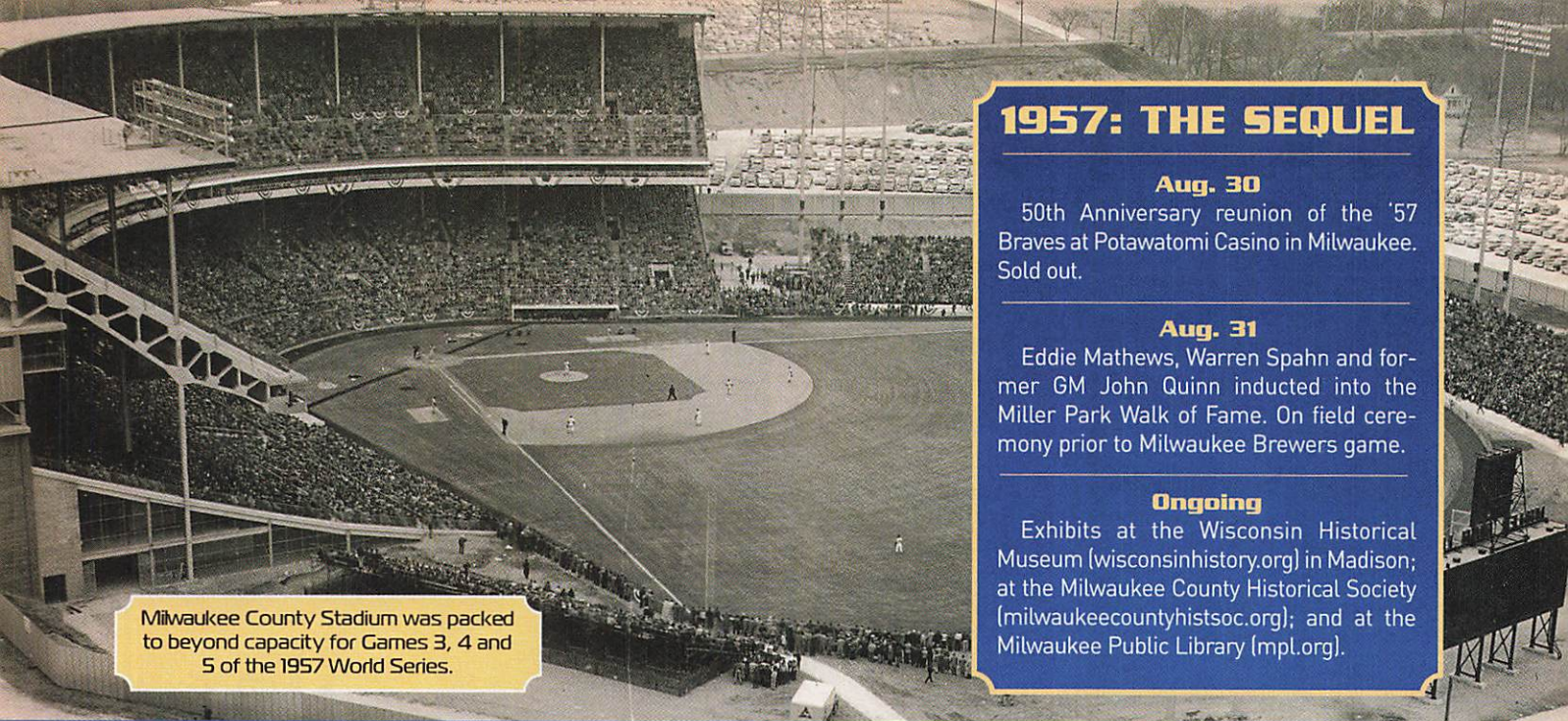
A member of the Brown Trail Church of Christ, McWilliams remains connected to Atlanta through his church's affiliation with the Avondale Church of Christ in Decatur, Ga.

"We had a nice time in Atlanta," McWilliams said. "Two of our kids were born there, and we still have some good friends there."



McWilliams had his best season as a Brave in 1978 when he was 9-3 with a 2.81 ERA as a rookie, but he won 15 games for the Pirates in 1983.

ATLANTA BRAVES



Milwaukee County Stadium was packed to beyond capacity for Games 3, 4 and 5 of the 1957 World Series.

1957: THE SEQUEL

Aug. 30

50th Anniversary reunion of the '57 Braves at Potawatomi Casino in Milwaukee. Sold out.

Aug. 31

Eddie Mathews, Warren Spahn and former GM John Quinn inducted into the Miller Park Walk of Fame. On field ceremony prior to Milwaukee Brewers game.

Ongoing

Exhibits at the Wisconsin Historical Museum (wisconsinhistory.org) in Madison; at the Milwaukee County Historical Society (milwaukeecountyhistsoc.org); and at the Milwaukee Public Library (mpl.org).

THE SERIES

Lou Burdette's Finest Hour(s) Delivered Baseball's Ultimate Prize to Milwaukee

BY GARY CARUSO

THERE ARE COUNTLESS ironic twists throughout baseball history. Perhaps none surpasses the performance by the MVP of the 1957 World Series.

Late in the 1951 season, the Yankees wanted to bolster their pitching for the stretch run at another American League pennant and World Series championship. To do that, they purchased Johnny Sain from the Braves in late August for \$50,000 and threw in an unknown righthander named Lou Burdette to sweeten the deal.

Burdette had but one and a third innings of big league experience, but his acquisition impacted the franchise in a manner no one could have predicted at the time.

The Yankees won that 1951 Series and three of the next five. They were heavily favored to win yet another in 1957 until Burdette came back to haunt them with one of the greatest pitching efforts in post-season history.

Then 29 years old and with 85 big league wins to his credit, Burdette pitched three complete-game victories, shutting out the Bronx Bombers over the last 24 of the 27 innings he worked, to almost single-handedly deliver Milwaukee a World Championship.

Here's a recap of how that Series between the mighty Yankees of Mickey Mantle, Whitey Ford and Yogi Berra and the upstart Braves unfolded.

GAME 1

Though both the Braves and Yankees were laden with power-

ful hitters, the first game was a pitchers' duel. Yankees manager Casey Stengel called on Ford, and Braves manager Fred Haney countered with Warren Spahn at Yankee Stadium.

New York took a 1-0 lead in the fifth on an RBI double by Hank Bauer and added two more runs off Spahn in the sixth. Milwaukee could manage only a run in the seventh on an RBI single by Red Schoendienst and lost, 3-1.

GAME 2

Burdette, a 17-game winner in the regular season, opposed Bobby Shantz in the second game. The teams were tied, 2-2, through three, and only a sensational running catch by Milwaukee left-fielder Wes Covington kept it that close. However, the Braves scored twice in the fourth on three singles and an error for a 4-2 lead that Burdette protected the rest of the way with a seven-hitter.

GAME 3

The scene shifted to County Stadium in Milwaukee, and the Braves were humbled, 12-3. Their jubilant fans never really had a chance to get into the game, because New York scored three in the first, knocking out starter Bob Buhl, and coasting to victory in spite of a home run by Hank Aaron and four innings of scoreless relief by Ernie Johnson and Don McMahon. The Yankees collected just nine hits, but three were home runs (Mantle and two for Tony Kubek), and the Braves supported the New York hitters by issuing 11 walks.



This year marks the 50th Anniversary of the Milwaukee Braves' 1957 World Series championship. Throughout the year, ChopTalk is revisiting one of the most-glorious accomplishments in franchise history with a series of stories about the people and highlights of this storied chapter in Braves history.

GAME 4

The Series turned on the Braves' dramatic, 7-5, victory in 10 innings. Spahn went the route to outlast five Yankees pitchers. However, the great lefthander let a 4-1 lead slip away with two outs in the ninth when Elston Howard hit a three-run homer to tie the game.

The Yankees took a 5-4 edge in the top of the 10th on a two-out single by Kubek and a triple by Hank Bauer and seemed poised to take a 3-1 edge in the Series.

In the bottom of the 10th, though, fate seemingly intervened. Nippy Jones led off as a pinch-hitter for Spahn. Jones skipped away from an inside pitch by Tommy Byrne and complained that the ball hit him. Umpire Augie Donatelli disagreed, but at Jones' request, inspected the ball. When he saw a smudge of black shoe polish, he sent Jones to first base.

With one out, Johnny Logan doubled in the tying run. That brought up slugger Eddie Mathews, who was just 1-for-11 at that point, prompting Stengel to pitch to him rather than issue an intentional walk. Mathews responded with a game-ending, two-run homer to even the Series at two games apiece.

GAME 5

This was a classic duel between Burdette and Ford, two pitchers coming off complete game victories (Ford in Game 1 and Burdette in Game 2). The game was scoreless until the bottom of the sixth when the ever-hustling Mathews beat out an infield grounder for a single with two outs. Aaron and Joe Adcock followed with singles to give the Braves a 1-0 lead - which is the way the game ended.

The Braves made the most of six singles and walk against Ford and Bob Turley in the eighth. Burdette didn't walk a man and

yielded seven singles - never more than one in an inning. Once again, Covington - not known for his defense - made a sensational catch in left to help Burdette.

The Braves led in games, 3-2, as the Series returned to New York.

GAME 6

Home runs told the story in this game. The Yankees took a 2-0 lead off Bob Buhl when Yogi Berra homered with a man on in the third. Frank Torre and Aaron hit solo home runs off Turley in the fifth and seventh innings, respectively, to tie the score. However, Bauer answered with a solo home run in the bottom of the seventh, and Turley made it stand up for a 3-2 victory to even the Series.

GAME 7

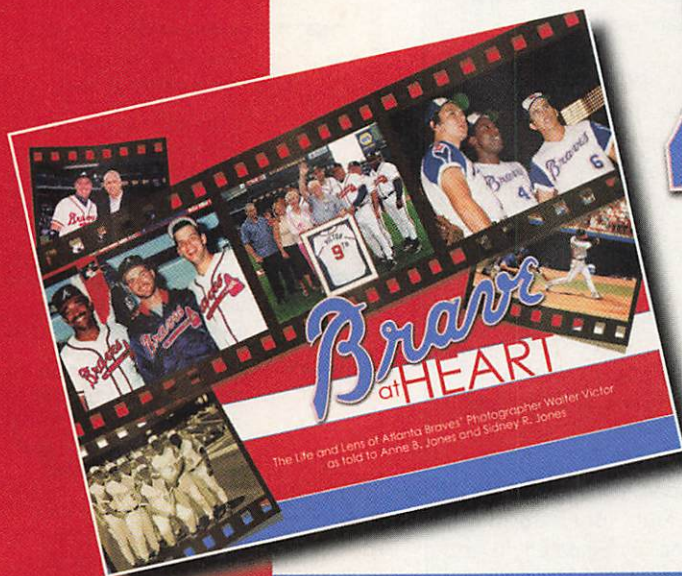
Spahn was supposed to start the final game for the Braves but was weakened by a three-day bout with flu. Therefore, Haney gave the ball to the hot hand of Burdette, even though the righthander had but two days of rest.

Nevertheless, it was a mismatch. The Yankees simply could not solve Burdette. He shut them out again, this time on seven hits and one walk, for a 5-0 decision that made the Milwaukee Braves World Champions.

The Braves scored four in the third against Don Larsen and Shantz to give Burdette all the support he needed. Mathews doubled in two runs, and Aaron and Torre had the other two RBIs. Del Crandall homered in the eighth to complete the scoring.

Burdette didn't allow a runner past second until the ninth when Mathews made a backhanded stab with the bases loaded and stepped on third for the forceout that ended the Series.

Burdette posted a Series ERA of 0.67 to earn the MVP award.



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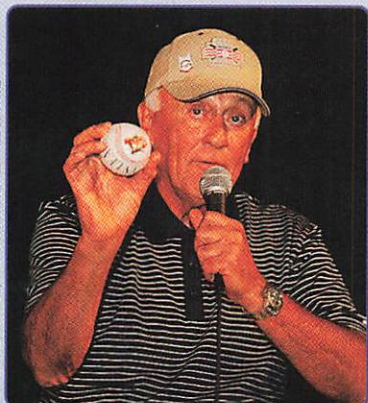
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ALUMNI NOTES



Phil Niekro (RHP, 1964-83, '87) was one of approximately 50 Hall of Famers who stood behind this year's inductees, Cal Ripken and Tony Gwynn, at the induction ceremony July 29 at Cooperstown, N.Y. **Judy Mathews**, widow of **Eddie Mathews** (3B, 1952-66; Coach, 1971-72; Mgr., 1972-74), also attended.



Knucksie talks about the finer points of knuckleball pitching at Cooperstown.

Among the activities Niekro participated in was the sold out "Connecting Generations", a light-hearted, 90-minute event that also featured Robin Yount, Jim Palmer and Duke Snider. It included a trivia contest and give-and-take between the panel and audience during which Niekro explained that a knuckleball is thrown with the fingernails, not the fingertips.

The Mets' **Tom Glavine** (LHP, 1987-2002) won his 300th game Aug. 5, beating the Cubs, 8-3, at Wrigley Field. He's just the fifth lefty to reach 300 and the 23rd pitcher overall.

The Utah High School Activities Association wanted to get a copy of **Dale Murphy's** "I won't cheat" booklet in to the hands of every high school athlete, so they worked with Murphy (OF/1B/C, 1976-90) and his partners to find sponsors so they can distribute 60,000 of the pamphlets at no cost to the recipients. Murphy will be in Georgia the first week of September to conduct ses-

sions with a variety of groups. For more information, go to the program web site at iwontcheat.com.

Milwaukee's **Tony Graffanino** (INF, 1996-98) is out for the rest of the season after suffering a torn ACL in his right knee Aug. 8.

Seattle's **Chris Reitsma** (RHP, 2004-06) had elbow surgery to remove scar tissue and a small section of bone, ending his season in July for the second straight year. It's his fifth operation on the elbow, but he plans to be back for spring training.

Wilson Betemit (INF, 2001, 2004-06) was traded from the Dodgers to the Yankees July 31 for RHP Scott Proctor.

San Diego fired hitting coach **Merv Rettenmund** (Coach, 2000-02) and replaced him with **Wally Joyner** (1B, 2000) July 31.

Bill Robinson (OF, 1966) died July 29 at age 64. He was working as the Dodgers' minor league hitting coordinator and was in Las Vegas to visit the Triple-A team at the time.

Bob Didier (C, 1969-72) joined a group of former major leaguers in August to coach at the Major League Baseball European Academy in Italy for 55 players.

The Kansas City Royals acquired **Roman Colon** (RHP, 2004-05) from the Detroit Tigers.

The Pirates retired uniform No. 11 in honor of Hall of Famer **Paul Waner** (OF, 1941-42).

Claude Raymond (RHP, 1961-63, '67-69) and four other former Montreal Expos participated in a July 22 tribute to Canada's first major league team held by the Ottawa Lynx of the International League. They signed autographs and played a three-inning game against fans.

BIRTHDAYS

SEPTEMBER

1 ST	TOM BURGESS (80) RICO CARTY (68) CRAIG SKOK (60)
3 RD	DAVE CAMPBELL (56) TOM THOBE (38) CHAD FOX (37)
4 TH	DOYLE ALEXANDER (57)
6 TH	MIKE THOMPSON (58) GREG OLSON (47) FRANK BROOKS (29)
7 TH	SERGIO VALDEZ (43) DARREN BRAGG (38)
8 TH	LOU SLEATER (81) STEVE HARGAN (65)
9 TH	MIKE HAMPTON (35) KYLE DAVIES (24)
10 TH	PRESTON HANNA (53) NICK GREEN (29) DANYS BAEZ (30)
12 TH	STAN LOPATA (82) TRENCH DAVIS (47)
13 TH	MIKE FISCHLIN (52) DENNY NEAGLE (39)
14 TH	JOE WINKELSAS (34) GEORGE LOMBARD (32)
15 TH	GAYLORD PERRY (69) DON COLLINS (55)
16 TH	ROGER MORET (58)
17 TH	ORLANDO CEPEDA (70) BOBBY WINE (69)
19 TH	VERN BENSON (83) JOE DAWLEY (36) JOEY DEVINE (24)
20 TH	RICH MORALES (64) RORIC HARRISON (61) DAVE GALLAGHER (47)
22 ND	KEN ASPROMONTE (76) LOU JOHNSON (73)
23 RD	WOODY WOODWARD (65) JIM MORRISON (55) BRIAN ASSELSTINE (54)
24 RD	MIKE KRZNICH (76) ROD GILBREATH (55) JIM ACKER (49) BERNARD GILKEY (41) JESSE GARCIA (34)
25 TH	JIM WESSINGER (52) GLENN HUBBARD (50) RAY HOLBERT (37)
26 TH	DOUG SISK (50) DAVE MARTINEZ (43) MATT MURRAY (37)
28 TH	CHARLEY KERFELD (44)
29 TH	HOWIE BEDELL (72)



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SEPTEMBER SETUP

THERE WILL NEVER BE another 1991. Who would want one anyway? The Braves would have to fall to "worst" before getting back to "first." The idea, of course, is to stay at the top.

But recent developments do bring back thoughts of the early 1990s.

First came the Mark Teixeira deal - a much-needed, slugging first baseman to bat in the cleanup slot.

That's exactly what John Schuerholz pulled off at mid-season in 1993 to bring in Fred McGriff, who spurred the Braves to a stunning turnaround that enabled them to erase a 10-game deficit and win the division on the last day of the season.

Then came Willie Harris' game-saving, home-run-robbing, ninth-inning catch against the Mets Aug. 9 at Shea Stadium. It brought back images of what is known as "The Catch" by Otis Nixon that enabled the Braves to beat Pittsburgh, 1-0, and extend a winning streak to 13 games in mid-1992. If the Braves overtake the Mets and hold off the Phillies, Harris' catch is bound to go down in history as "The Catch II."

However, if these similarities to the early '90s are indeed "signs" that true magic still exists in the Braves arena, Bobby Cox's club needs to at least win the division. That's no small order.

Yes, the addition of Teixeira, as well as Ron Mahay and hopefully Octavio Dotel and Royce Ring, were sensational ploys to strengthen the team for a run at reclaiming the NL East. And, yes, there will be nights when the Braves simply bludgeon the opposition into submission.

The key to winning, though, is still pitching. Consistently strong pitching will produce better results in the long run than consistently strong hitting. It's just the nature of the game. Hitting is more prone to ups and downs than pitching is.

The good news is that the Braves' deadline moves also strengthened the pitching, especially if Dotel bounces back quickly from a shoulder strain and Ring adds left-handed sting in September.... and - more importantly -

neither the Mets nor the Phillies have dominant pitching either.

Schuerholz did a masterful job of positioning the Braves' roster, and especially the everyday lineup, for a run at the division title. But such success is far from automatic, as the wave of euphoria after Teixeira's acquisition seemed to indicate.

The challenge for Cox remains a need to squeeze every last ounce of potential out of the pitching staff - something he has proven to be an expert at doing in the past.

Smoltz, Hudson, James and Carlyle have to continue to gut it out and hand things off to the bullpen - hopefully not too soon - in good repair. If not overworked, the bullpen will get the job done more often than not.

The final month of the regular season shapes up as quite a test for the Braves - and for the fans. It's going to be tense - but certainly exciting. That's all the fans of any team have a right to expect in September. Thanks to Schuerholz, the roster is geared up for the challenge.

TIME TO EXTEND congratulations pertaining to events we cannot cover in this issue, due to deadlines. But we will bring you stories and photos about them in the October issue.

David Justice was to be inducted into the Braves Hall of Fame the day after this issue went to press. He's certainly a worthy addition and gives the Braves Hall its first tie to the current era of extended success that began in 1991, Justice's second full season.

The accomplishments of the 1957 World Champion Braves will be celebrated Aug. 30 in Milwaukee when a large group of players from that magical season reunite to reminisce about a long-ago season that was every bit as magical, in its time, as 1991 was to the contemporary franchise and its fans. Warm and hearty congratulations to this extraordinary group who dramatically shaped my life and career.

THIS ISSUE OF CHOPTALK was mailed Aug. 22. The October issue will be mailed Sept. 21.

BEYOND BASEBALL

Bobby Cox shows his grandsons, Dakota Mason (L) and Cade Lindsay, the side of Turner Field that few people ever experience.

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN



PATTY RASMUSSEN

GRANDPA'S PLACE

BOBBY COX hosted two of his grandsons, **Dakota Mason**, 15, who lives in Adairsville, Ga., near his grandpa, and **Cade Lindsay**, 12, who lives in North Carolina, during batting practice July 21. In true grandpa fashion, Cox played catch out on the field with the youngsters, took them to the bullpen to throw off the mound, and even took pictures of them.



THERE WAS PLENTY OF "SURPRISE" to go around on July 15, the night **Kim Hudson** threw a surprise birthday party for her husband, **Tim**. Kim asked guests to arrive by 5 p.m. in order to be in place by the time Tim returned from the ballpark after a Sunday day game. Instead, the surprise was on Kim when the 1:05 game ended in just two hours and 17 minutes, and Tim was on his way home by 4 o'clock.

"I had to start calling our local friends to ask them to come early so there would be someone here!" said Kim.

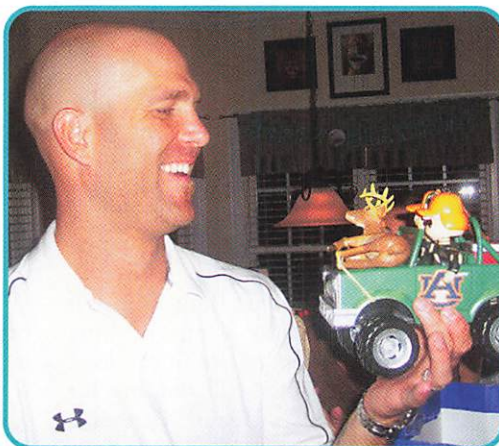
Many other friends and family were driving to the Hudsons' Peachtree City home from Alabama. In order to stall for more time, Kim called Tim and asked him to pick up a few items from the grocery store on his way home. By the time the pitcher arrived at his house, about 50 guests had assembled on the front steps to yell, "Surprise!"

The party featured an excellent rock-and-roll cover band that performed most of the evening under a tent in the backyard. Children played in a large inflatable castle, and several games of pick-up Wiffle ball broke out. Hudson received assorted unique gifts, including a battery-powered toy truck emblazoned with Auburn University stickers which played the song "Low Rider", and a tie-dyed Braves t-shirt with "Huddy Rocks" on the back in flashy silver letters.

Among the guests were **Matt Diaz**, his wife **Leslee** and son **Nathan**, and **Chris Woodward**, wife **Erin**, daughter **Sophie** and son **Mason**. By the way, Tim officially turned 32 the day before the party...

Several families made the trip to California and Arizona when the Braves played the San Francisco Giants and Arizona Diamondbacks, July 23-29. **Kim Hudson** used the opportunity to reconnect with some of her friends living in the East Bay area from her husband's years with the Oakland A's. **Kathy Porter**, wife of trainer **Jeff Porter**, and son **David**, also made the trip, David's last hurrah before starting high school in August. **Lynne Cadahia**, wife of bench coach **Chino Cadahia**, and daughter **Lauren** were able to see family and friends while on the trip. The Cadahias are native Californians and live in Visalia in the off-season.

The 15th annual **John Smoltz/Tim Hudson/Jeff Francoeur Atlanta Braves Celebrity-Am** golf tournament was held Aug. 13 at three different Atlanta area golf courses - Atlanta National Golf Club, White Columns Country Club and Setindown Creek. A week earlier, a draw party and auction were held Aug. 5 at Barnacle's, a seafood restaurant. With such high-end items available as a trip for two to Costa Rica and a bowling party with Braves players and their wives, the auction raised nearly \$48,000 for the Aflac Cancer



PATTY RASMUSSEN

Tim Hudson sizes up his new toy truck - the perfect birthday gift for the pitcher who has everything.



Center and Blood Disorders Service at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.

"The bowling party went for almost \$5,000," said Kim Hudson, who also arranged for Braves wives to put together themed gift baskets for auction. Players attending included Smoltz, Hudson, Francoeur, **Andruw Jones**, **Tyler Yates** and **Chris Woodward**. The Aug. 13 golf tournament was a little light on participation by Braves due to ESPN changing the Sunday 1:05 start in Philadelphia to an 8 p.m. Game of the Week...

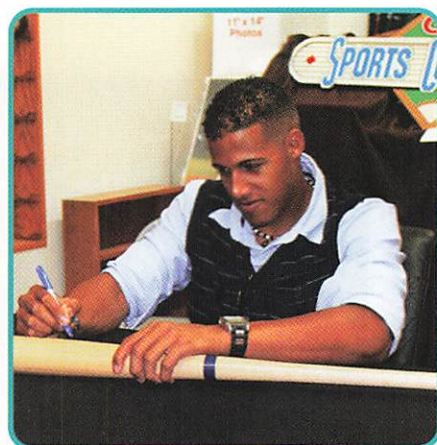
Andruw and **Nicole Jones** will host a gala and golf tournament Nov. 10-11 to benefit Jaden's Ladder, an organization that helps women and families affected by domestic violence. The Nov. 10 gala will be held at a private home in Atlanta, and the tournament will be held the following day

Yunel Escobar signs one of the nearly 200 items he autographed at BP Sports Collectibles in Marietta July 21. It was his first such appearance.

at Heritage Golf Club, also in Atlanta.

The gala will feature a performance by R&B artist **Keith Sweat** and an auction for the opportunity to play golf with celebrities and athletes in the tournament. Among the sports celebs scheduled to appear are **Jeff Francoeur**, Boston Red Sox designated hitter **David Ortiz**, Yankees third baseman **Alex Rodriguez**, former NBA coach **Larry Brown**, and Washington Wizards assistant coach **Randy Ayers**.

Tickets to the gala are \$250, and an individual golf package, which includes two



CARLOS RESTREPO

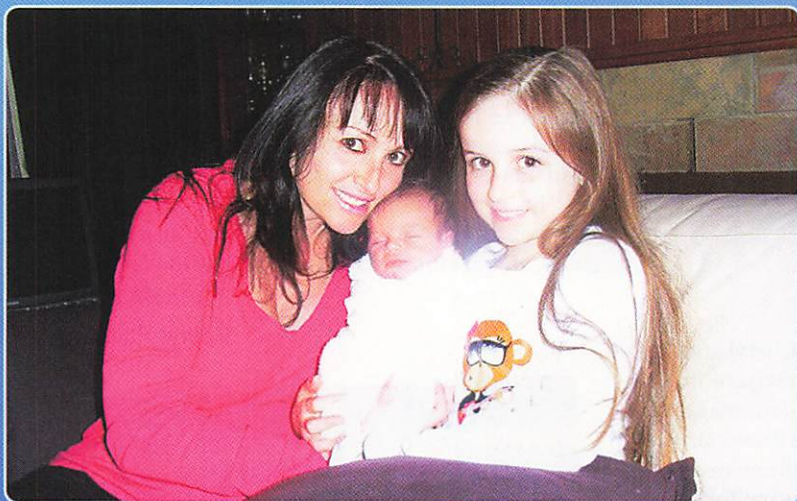
gala tickets, is available for \$650. For more information, call Jaden's Ladder at (603) 430-1118 or visit jadensladder.org...

Jonny Diaz, brother of **Matt Diaz**, opened for Christian rock band Mercy Me at a Turner Field concert after the Aug. 4 game. Jonny performed two songs, one from his newest CD, "They Need Love," and also participated in Baseball Chapel prior to the game. **John Smoltz** spoke to the crowd of approximately 4,000 fans who stayed for the post-game concert...

New reliever **Ron Mahay** and pitching coach **Roger McDowell** have more in common than baseball. Both also appeared on popular television shows. McDowell played himself in the famous "Second Spitter" episode of "Seinfeld", and Mahay made several appearances as an extra on the long running soap opera, "All My Children." Mahay's wife, **Alison**, used to work at "All My Children" and arranged for him to go on the show after Mahay remarked that he could stand around and look good in a tux. "I got to be in the front of a restaurant scene, pretending to talk and eat," said Mahay. "Then I played a cop in a police station five or six times." Because soap operas don't show many reruns, Mahay hasn't seen any residual checks from his brief television career...

Julie James, wife of **Chuck James**, made her first trip to the Big Apple when the Braves played the Mets Aug. 7-9. "I'm sure I'll be all wide eyed looking at all the buildings and people," she said.

Also making the trip to New York were **Leslee Diaz** and baby **Nathan** (Matt), **Liesel Yates** (Tyler), **Minerva Escobar** (Yunel), and **Erin Woodward**, who lived in Manhattan when her husband, Chris, played for the Mets.



Tracey Moylan and older daughter Montana show off baby Matisse Ava, who won't meet her daddy, Peter, until this month.

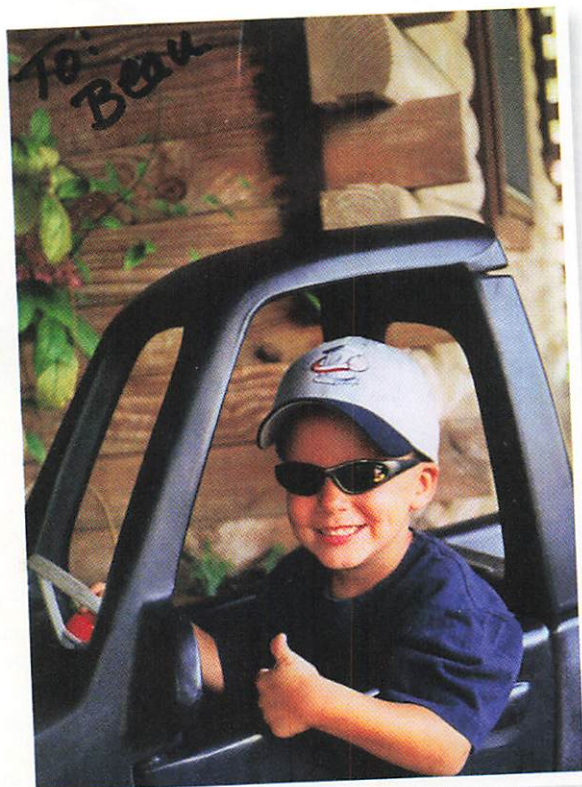
BULLPEN ADDITION

CONGRATULATIONS to **Peter Moylan** and his wife, **Tracey**, on the birth of their second child, daughter **Matisse Ava**, born July 20 in Vermont, Australia. Moylan hasn't seen his family since before spring training, but Tracey plans to visit the U.S. in September to introduce Matisse to her daddy.

When asked via e-mail how she was coping as a temporary "single mum," Tracey replied, "So far, so good. She

has been a wonderful baby. I even got six hours straight sleep last night, and she's only 10 days old! It's been up and down, but generally quite normal for this stage."

The couple has an older daughter, **Montana**, who will also visit in September. Moylan kept up with his family via daily phone calls and internet chats but admits, "I'll probably cry when I see her for the first time."



HEY, HOLLYWOOD! ✉

My neighbors are the parents of (former) Rome Braves pitcher Beau Jones. This picture of my grandson, Cole, was taken as a fun "thank you" for Beau because he sent this autographed cap back home to one of his youngest fans. Beau and his dad, Billy, always call Cole "Hollywood", so he thought he would show his appreciation to Beau by strutting his Atlanta Braves t-shirt, autographed Rome Braves cap, "Hollywood" style sunglasses, and a big "thumbs up."

PAM TROXLER
Destrehan, La.

ED. - Jones was traded to Texas in the Mark Teixeira deal.

THE EYES OF TEXAS ✉

This is my nine-month-old grandson, Rylan Reichenau. He and I and his Aunt Jill Hodde, whose picture appeared in ChopTalk in 2002, are huge Braves fans. We're planning on Rylan playing for the Braves some day. After he gets a little older, I want to bring him to Atlanta for a game, along with Jill and Rylan's parents, Justin and Lauren. We go to see the Braves in Arlington, when they play the Rangers in interleague games, and to Houston to see them play the Astros.

DONNA HODDE
Round Rock, Tex.

CELEBRATING IN MILWAUKEE ✉

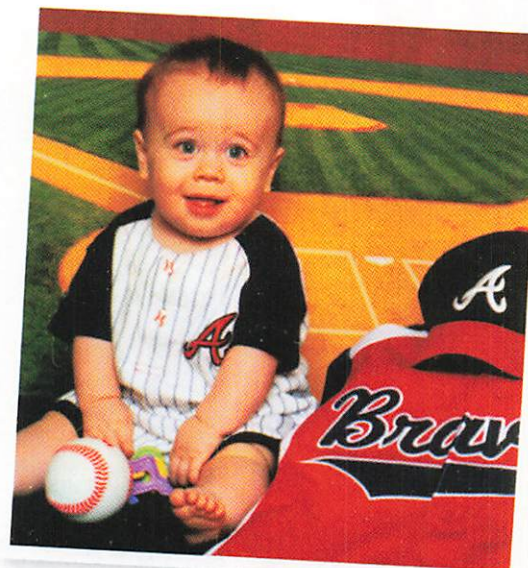
On May 28, my daughter and son-in-law (Cheryl and Jim Kenny) got tickets for the Brewers and Braves game in Milwaukee for my 80th birthday (they even put my name on the scoreboard at Miller Park). I have been a Braves fan since 1990, and this was my first game. We really enjoyed it. Winning the game was one thing, but Andruw Jones hitting a home run put the icing on the cake. I enjoy ChopTalk and got a subscription for my daughter, too.

ROSLYN CEDAR
Crystal River, Fla.

STAYING IN TOUCH ✉

As a former Georgia resident, I've kept up with the Braves for more than 40 years. I really like the new ChopTalk magazine. I've been in Florida for 25 years, but we still come back to Turner Field once a year. I'm so proud of the Braves!

FRAN SHEFFIELD
Lakeland, Fla.



CHOPTALK AND THE ATLANTA BRAVES SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

A FURRY FAN ✉

"Callie", our 10-year-old Corgi, has enjoyed Braves baseball all her life. As shown here, her favorite player is Smoltzie.

DONA & WAYNE BURTON
Rainbow City, Ala.

DRESSING FOR SUCCESS ✉

I enjoy reading ChopTalk and have shared other pictures with your readers. Here's a picture of John Maxwell Gillespie, my youngest grandson. He likes to watch the Braves with me, and of course, he always gets all dressed up in one of his Braves outfits. He may be a future Braves player, then I can watch one of my own on the field. We're looking forward to seeing the Braves in the 2007 World Series. Love those guys!

CAROL DUDLEY
Clackamas, Oregon



SHARE YOUR BRAVES FEVER!

WRITE TO US ✉

Talkin' Chop c/o ChopTalk
P.O. Box 80750
Conyers, Ga. 30013-8750
Letters@ChopTalkonline.com

Letters and photos chosen for publication are subject to editing, and photos cannot be returned. Digital photos are preferred. Home inkjet prints are not high enough quality for us to publish.

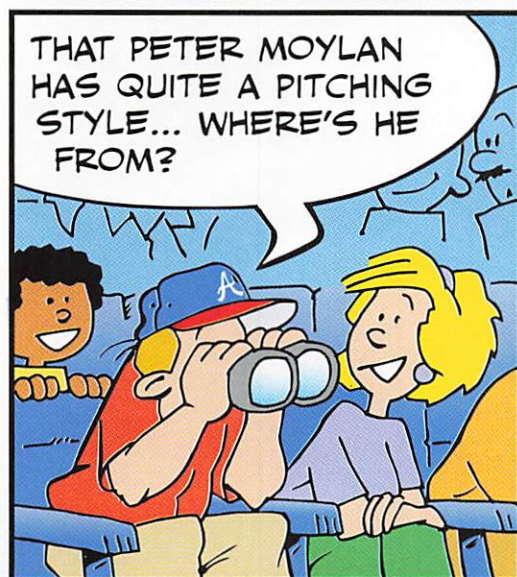
WRITE THE BRAVES ✉

Atlanta Braves
P.O. Box 4064
Atlanta, Ga. 30302

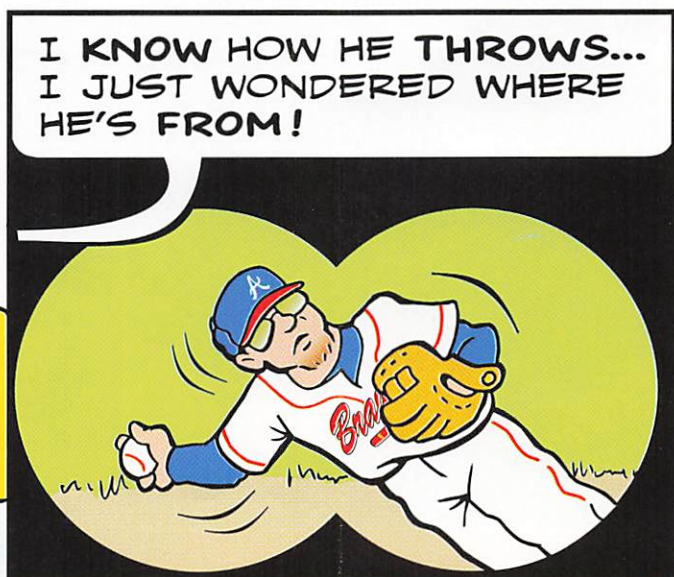
For the Braves players, Bobby Cox, the coaches, broadcasters, or members of the front office.

If you request a response, be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Never send anything of value that you want returned. This is no guarantee of a reply.

THE AUSSIE SIDEWINDER



I HEARD
HE'S
FROM
DOWN
UNDER!

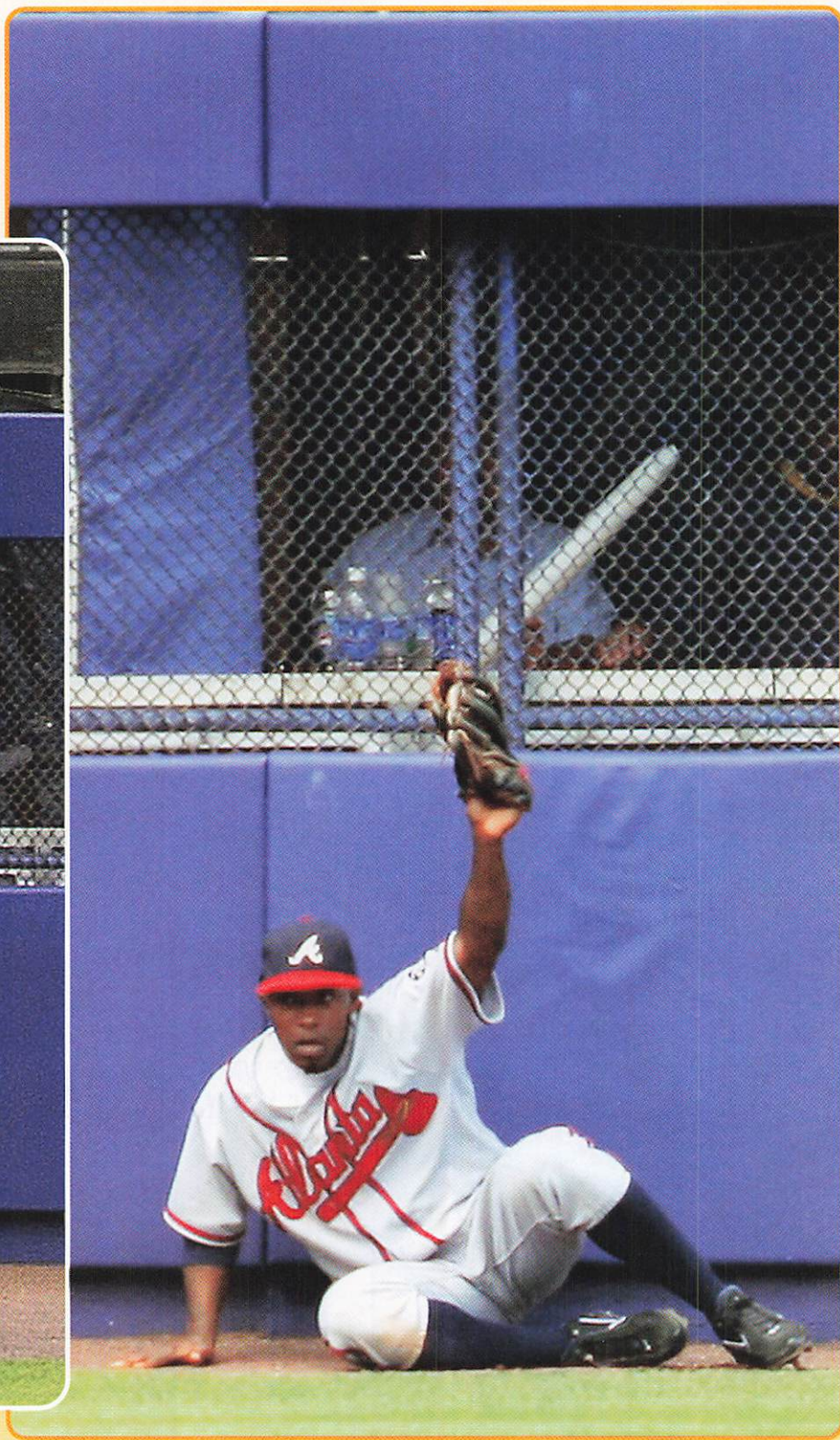


GIVING THE METS THE WILLIE(S)!

WILLIE HARRIS robs Carlos Delgado of a game-tying, ninth-inning home run Aug. 9 at Shea Stadium, enabling the Braves to beat the Mets, 7-6, take two of three in the series, and draw a line in the dirt for - perhaps - a thrilling stretch run at reclaiming the NL East crown.



DAVID L. POKRESS/NEWSDAY/MCT



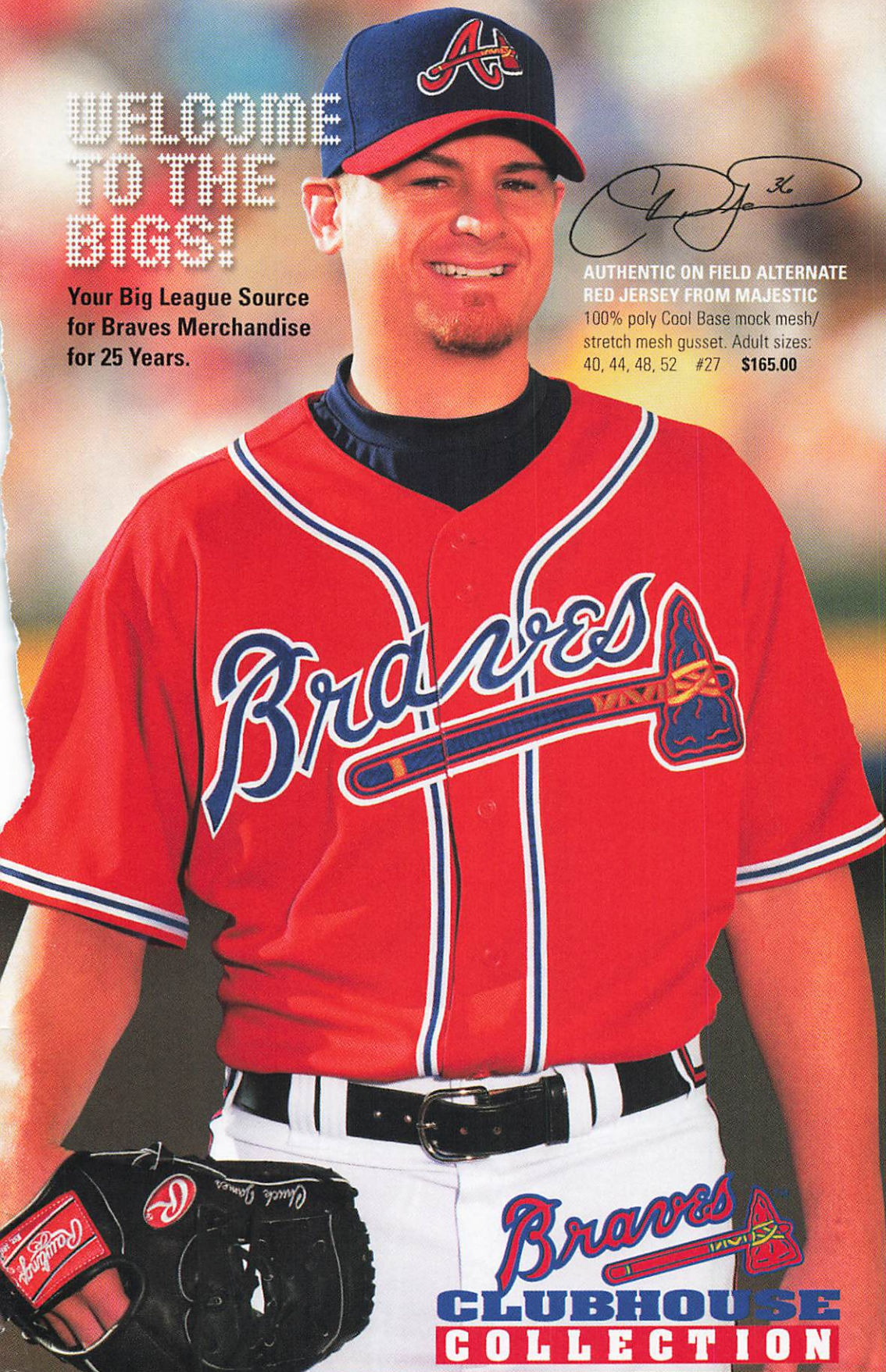
REUTERS/NAV STUBBINS

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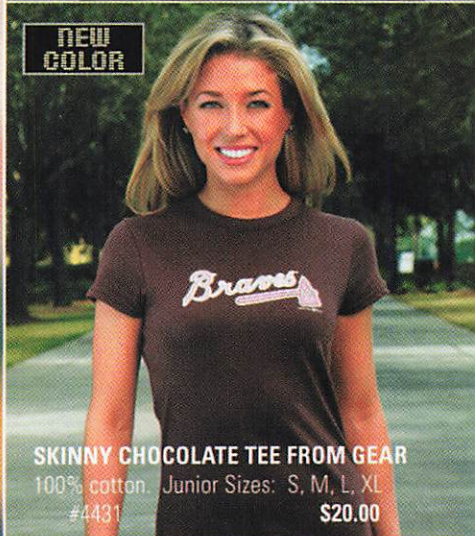


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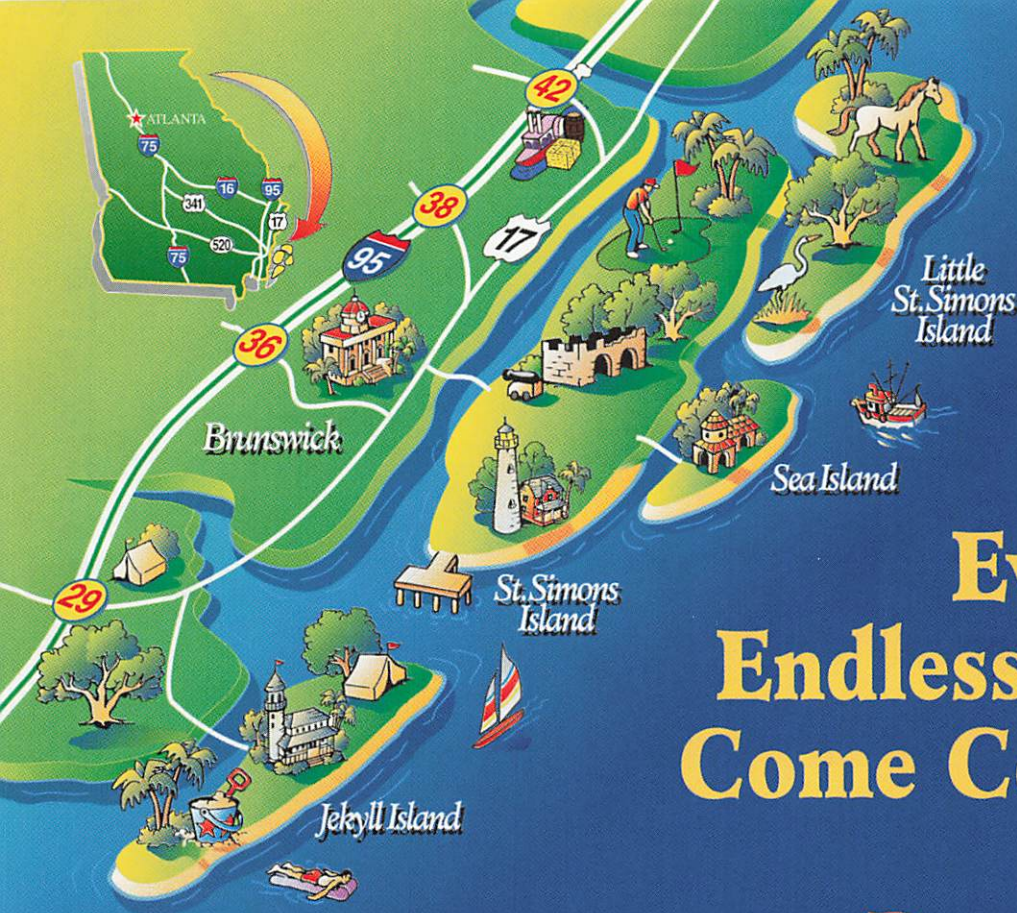
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